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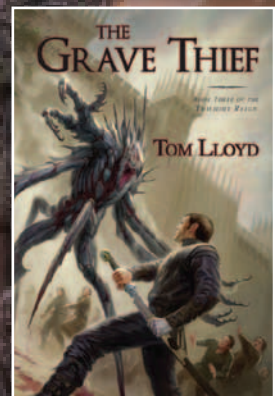
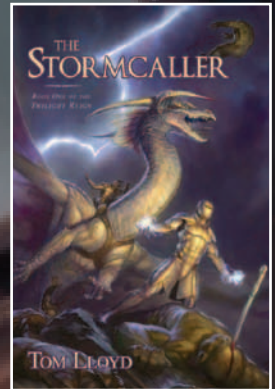
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On the Cover

Nicole Cardiff painted "The Paladin's Treasure" for the Summer issue, combining gold and glory in a picture that tells a fine story. Paladins don't really do it for the loot.

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Editorial:

Ring-Givers

The leaders of men among the Vikings had a code to live up to. You can read some of the details in this issue's "Alternate Paladins" article (and I recommend that you do!), but for my purposes, it's enough to point out that generosity was not really optional for Viking jarls, chiefs, and leaders. If you wanted to lead a crew of bloodthirsty berserkers, you had better be what they called a ring-giver in those times: an open hand, generous to a fault, always finding a way to reward followers. Only a fool fails to reward a gang of berserks openly and often.

This description of generosity as a crucial element of leadership has stuck with me since high school, when my English teacher explained kennings, such as "the whale-road" (the ocean) and "ring-giver" (a lord, a leader). The contrast with our modern age is somewhat disappointing: say what you like about our political classes, the patronage system of rewarding your inner circle of followers is no longer regarded as honorable or noble. In fact, it's more likely to bring you a federal indictment than it is to bring you the treasure of the Nibelungen.

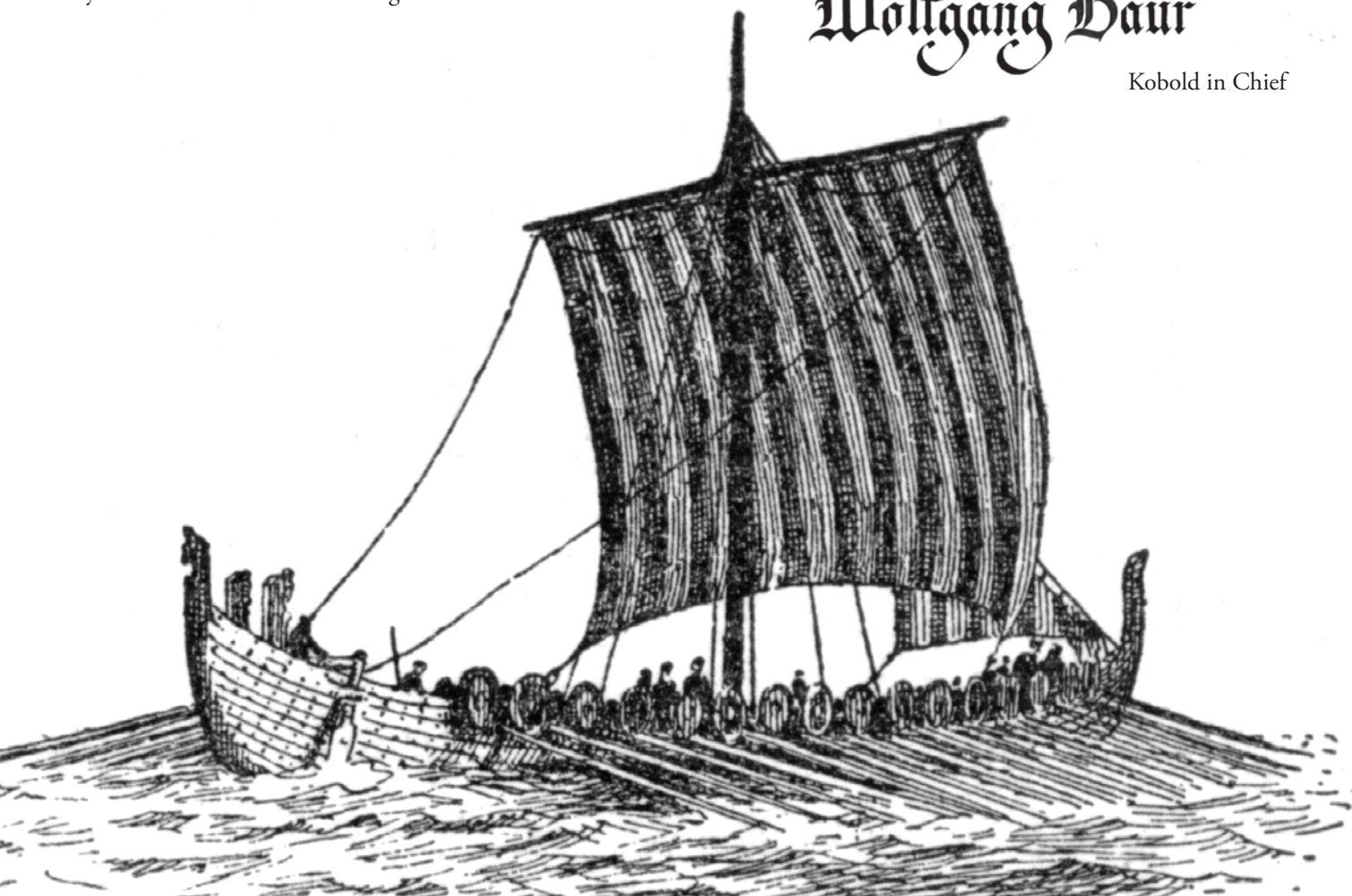
This is a roundabout way of getting to our theme this issue, which is treasure. As a game designer and a GM, I have a huge blind spot: I always forget to put the treasure in until right near the end of the design process, and—for some strange reason—the treasure side of things always strikes me as less compelling than it is on the player side of the screen. This issue, we're hoping to make amends for my decades of insufficient loot with a sampling of many fine and unusual treasures including paper treasures, magical perfumes, new figurines of wondrous power, dragon treasure hoards, and more.

If you have a tale of treasure, loot, and rewards (or lack of same), please send it to letters@koboldquarterly.com. I'd love to hear from you!

And remember, give out that treasure with an open hand, O Ring-Giver, lest you be torn apart by your berserk crew of gaming Vikings!

Wolfgang Baur

Kobold in Chief



Letters:

From the Mines

Now at Back List Books

Since our Friendly Local Gaming Store closed its doors, I've been pretty bummed. But today I walked into the book store and saw *Kobold Quarterly* on the shelf.

True, I've been bugging him for a month. He's even opening up to the idea of letting me run a game there on Wednesday nights. It also helps when the magazine looks so good on the shelf. I've had access to PDF review copies, but I still like having something to hold onto.

Keep up the good work industrious Kobolds, and many thanks to Fred at Back List Books.

—Tom Allman

Tom, thanks you so much for talking to the local bookstore about KQ. Getting the magazine into local shops makes a huge difference for us, and every store that decides to give us a chance means another step closer to moving KQ to more frequent publication. I hope your Wednesday night game there goes well!

Into the Air, Around the World

I recently found an issue of your magazine while stationed at Blad AB in Iraq, and I LOVED it. It gave me the gaming fix I really needed out here.

—Senior Airman Daniel Burns-McKernan
Shaw AFB

We've printed letters from folks in the service before, but I gotta say, it's a huge kick to know that kobolds are so widely travelled.

A New Golden Age

I have had a chance to review the download issue, and I have to say, it's as good or better than the old *Dragon* and *Dungeon* magazine days.

I especially appreciate the ecologies and guest writers. I will visit your web page soon and sign up for a year or two subscription of the print copy!

Thanks for the sample, and I will definitely recommend this to my fellow gamers.

—Randy Williams,

MSgt, USAF
USAF Academy, CO

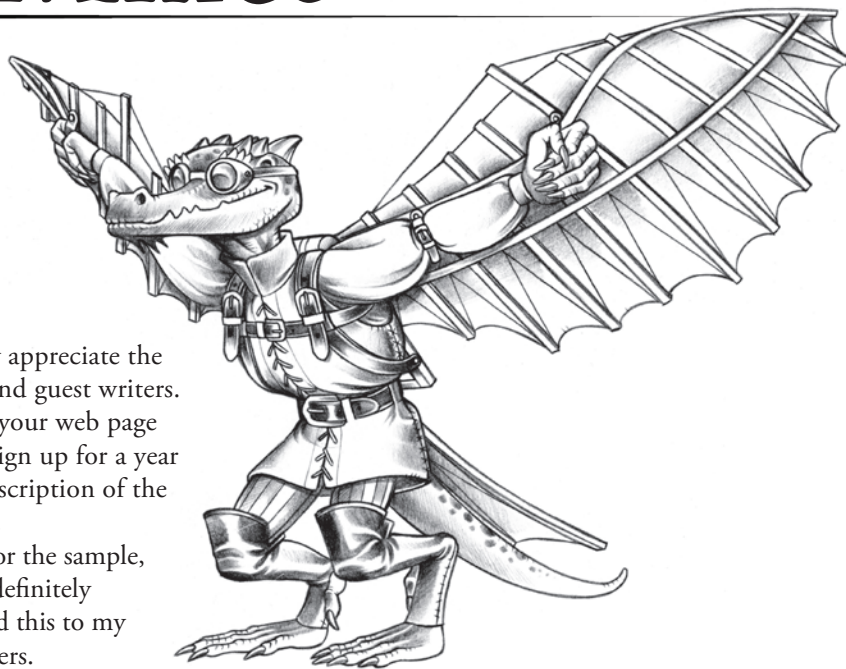
Thank you for the kind words, and we are very happy to have another subscriber. Every subscription is, as we may have mentioned previously, one step closer to a bigger, more colorful, and more frequent KQ. Kobold world domination needs your help!

Wondrous Non-Core Imaginings

On the Wondrous Imaginings blog, they quoted from your email where you had mentioned that you had only one request for OSR related articles.

I'd like to make request number two; however, I would also expand that request to other RPGs as well.

I was on the fence on whether or not I would renew my KQ subscription as I don't play 3/3.5/4 or Pathfinder. However, the inclusion of the Dragon Age article persuaded me to renew because, even though I don't play Dragon Age currently, it was refreshing to have another game represented. I also renewed on the hopes that having



articles based on games other than the core game demographic would be a recurring trend.

Anyway, I understand the need to focus on the core games, but please note that the expanded coverage was appreciated.

Keep up the great work.

—Ron Vargas

Ron, we are in fact covering Dragon Age again this issue (by the DA line developer and RPG legend Jeff Tidball, no less!), and we may have one or two non-core articles in the Fall issue as well. I'm sure we'll get some complaints and some compliments.

No No, Thank YOU

Wolfgang! You continue to rock! I don't play Pathfinder, and I don't play 4th Edition, but there's always something for me in *Kobold Quarterly*.

—Brett Andersen

Thanks! Our writers do a great job providing advice, hints, and materials. We're always happy to see the inventive queries and polished articles. Ω

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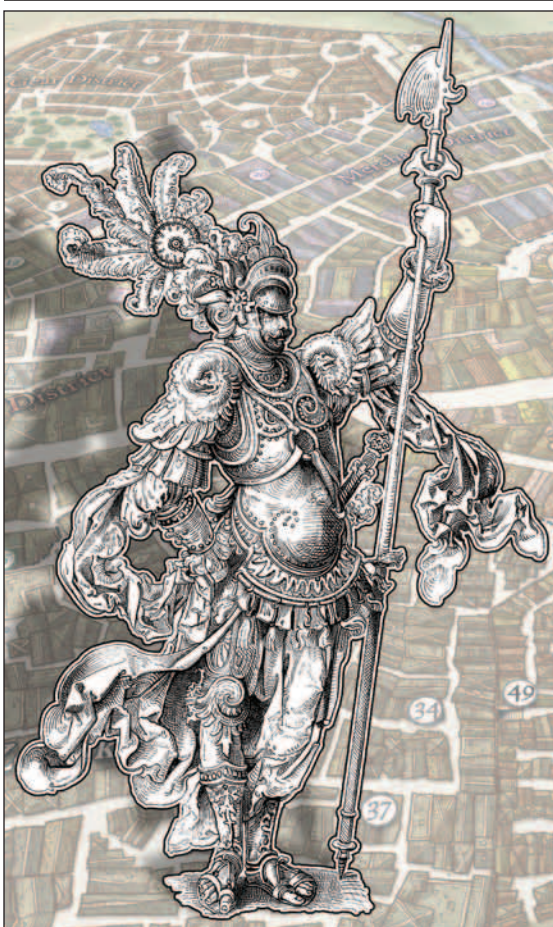
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Aasimar

You Can't Keep a Good Aasimar Down

By Kolja Raven Liqueur

Art by Russ Nicholson

Once agents of celestial intrigue, aasimars are now left to their own devices.

For ages, angels created avatars in their own likeness to stymie the dark powers intent on subjugating the mortal world.

Aasimars are the result: the product of rogue angels who strayed from the celestial realms into the mortal world.

Aasimars played a peripheral role in manipulating the dragonborn and tieflings against one another, eventually resulting in the downfall of both—an acceptable outcome in the eyes of aasimars. They feel no sacrifice is too great to achieve their goals.

Play an aasimar if you want...

- To serve the virtues of your god with heroism and a pragmatic will
- To act with unshakable conviction, knowing that the ends always justify the means
- To be a member of a race that favors all of the divine classes

Racial Traits

Average Height 5 ft. 6 in. – 6 ft. 2 in.

Average Weight 135 – 220 lb.

Ability scores +2 Wisdom (if you choose a class with the Divine power source, then you also gain +2 to one other ability score of your choice)

Size Medium

Speed 6 squares

Vision Normal

Languages Common, Supernal

Skill Bonuses +2 Insight, +2

Streetwise

Astral Origin Your ancestors were angels native to the Supernal Realms, so you are considered an immortal angel for the purpose of effects that relate to creature origin.

Exalted Defiance You can use exalted

defiance as an encounter power.

Immortal Boon You do not need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep, and you never make Endurance checks to resist the effect of starvation, thirst, or suffocation.

Radiant Resistance You have resistance to radiant damage equal to 5 + 1/2 your level.

Rapture You never fall asleep but must rest your body and mind (you enter a 4-hour state of rapture in which you gain the benefits of an extended rest, are fully aware of your surroundings, and notice approaching enemies and other events as normal).

Tenacious Focus You do not take the -2 attack penalty for targeting bloodied foes with cover or concealment. You still take the normal penalty for targeting bloodied foes with superior cover or total concealment.

EXALTED DEFIANCE (AASIMAR RACIAL POWER)

You are wreathed in a divine shield that blocks attacks and dispels fear.

Encounter

Immediate ♦ Interrupt

Personal

Trigger You are hit by an attack

Effect You either gain a racial bonus to AC and Reflex defense equal to your Wisdom modifier until the end of your next turn, or you negate the non-damaging effects of a power with the fear keyword

Typical Characteristics

Aasimars are virtually indistinguishable from humans, albeit completely devoid of physical flaws, no matter how trivial. As with humans, there is a wide variety of appearance among aasimars, but they are always in excellent shape, regardless of how they treat their bodies. Without the need to eat, aasimar never

become emaciated or obese; their bodies maintain perfect equilibrium.

To better integrate themselves among other humanoids, aasimars dress as humans, embracing decorative finery as appropriate to their station and purpose. However, unless actively seeking to pass themselves off as human, they are easy to identify by their habit of not breathing. Aasimars can choose to breathe naturally, whether to put people at ease or disguise their identity. They merely decide whether their bodies need to breathe from one moment to the next.

Playing an Aasimar

For as long as humans have walked the mortal world, aasimars have stood among them. The first aasimars were pious humans, transformed by angels into divine avatars. In exchange for this gift, the sired aasimar served the angel for a century, a decade, a year, and a day, after which time their immortal fate became their own. Not all of these angels truly represented the gods they claimed, nor did every aasimar loyally serve their patron.

The tasks assigned to aasimars were varied and unfathomable. Angels mostly kept the grand design of their plans hidden from those who executed them. Some aasimar were urged to incite discontent and revolt among the humanoid races while others were told to insinuate themselves into powerful advisory roles. In this way, a handful of aasimars, working independently and without knowledge of each other, undermined both the dragonborn and tiefling empires.

As aasimars grew more numerous

and aware of each other, the angels ceded their control, having lost the clandestine element of their mortal presence. In doing so, however, the lessons they taught were not forgotten. Aasimars continued to impose balance on the world and undermine tyrannical regimes but on their own terms. It comes as no surprise that most aasimar share an inflexible perception of their actions whereby the ends always justify the means, no matter how great the sacrifice.

As immortal creatures, aasimars take the long view, seeing worth in taking actions with benefits that might not manifest for decades. As creatures of perpetual health, they take care to blend in rather than outshine humans, all the while remaining watchful of change and upheaval in the world. This approach has served the aasimar well, both in their role as divine agents and as freebooting adventurers.

When aasimars reproduce with humans, the offspring is always an aasimar. While some of these children welcome the opportunity to serve a divine emissary, more independent-minded aasimars eschew the directives of angels. That does not, however, stop some angels from trying to collect servitude from the descendants of an aasimar they sired. How an aasimar reacts to their inherited responsibility is up to the individual.

Aasimar Characteristics Decisive, enduring, loyal, manipulative, observant, pragmatic, ruthless, stoic, trustworthy

Male Names Arioch, Brave, Cyril, Edwyn, Forge, Gavin, Ion, Justice, Lore, Mavros, Noble, Oath, Piran, Riley, Skuld, Thorn, Venture, Weylin

Female Names Aeryn, Chance, Devon, Elayn, Fate, Gael, Haven, Intent, Jorun, Keyra, Meta, Onyx, Peril, Quince, Rune, Skarn, Thistle, Vlayn

Backgrounds

An aasimar character has access to these background elements.

DIVINE MALCONTENT

You have grown weary of divine meddling in mortal affairs and work

to undermine the effort. In doing so, you have attracted the ire of angels and made several enemies. Were you directly sired by an angel or the descendant of an aasimar? How did the relationship turn sour? Was a course of action suggested that endangered your way of life or the lives of people you care about? Did the angel who sired you or your family lie about the god they represent? Did you outright refuse to do their bidding, or do you maintain the angelic relationship ingenuously?

Associated Skills—Bluff, Stealth

ORIGINAL CONVERT

You were one of the first humans brought into the ranks of the aasimar and have seen much of history during your long life. Until now, you have been content to observe the world and blend in among humanity. Recent events, however, have caused you to reassess your passive role and take a more active hand in mortal affairs. What changed your mind? Did an event threaten you or your family on a personal level? Has a kingdom risen to power with a destructive agenda that cannot be ignored? Have you become aware of a nefarious presence that only somebody of your objectivity can see?

Associated Skills—History, Perception

STEADFAST PROXY

You willingly serve a emissary of your god and follow its divine commands without question. This creature only appears on its own terms and never offers to help in your assigned tasks, forbidden by divine rules from interfering directly. Why are you so committed to the cause of angels? Are you one of the original aasimar who continue to serve even after your mandated servitude? Were you approached by an angel who sired your distant descendant? Do you follow the will of angels blindly or did they earn your trust at some point?

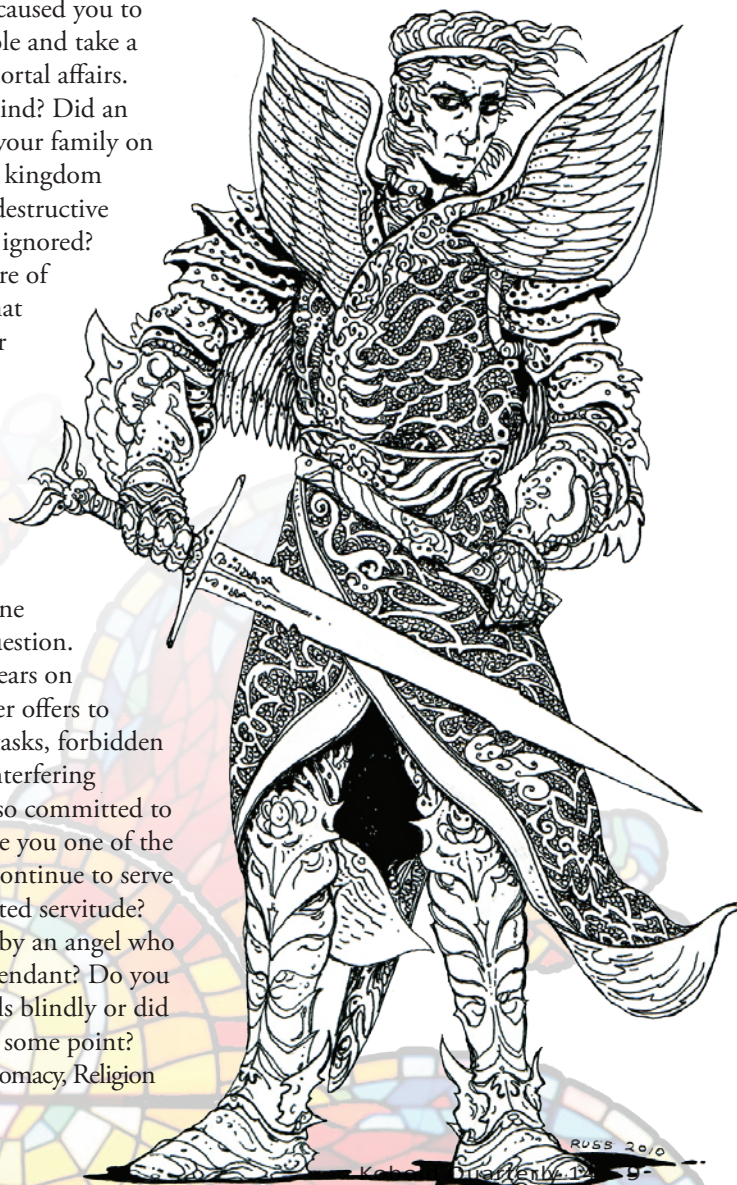
Associated Skills—Diplomacy, Religion

Aasimar Adventurers

Three sample aasimar adventurers are described below.

1) An angel appeared to Oath when he reached the age of maturity, informing him that his erstwhile father died before completing his mandatory servitude. Worse, the unpaid debt has fallen to his child. Rather than foisting the responsibility onto his own potential children, Oath agreed to finish off the divine service. Rather than follow in his father's footsteps as an invoker, however, he became a paladin—and especially keen on keeping his word.

2) Peril took her duties as a cleric of Erathis very seriously, but she could not shake the suspicion that her archbishop secretly worshipped Zehir. When her misgivings were confirmed, she took up the mace and defeated the bishop and



his followers, burning down the entire church to accomplish this goal. Rather than return to her cloistered life, Peril decided to stay with the adventurers she hired and help others.

3) Riley watched silently as his mother confronted an angel and accused the creature of not representing the god it claimed. The angel smote her in response and departed on wing, unaware of the hidden child. Still holding her dying body, Riley swore that he would avenge her death by destroying this angel. As this promise was made, his mother's last words revealed that the angel he seeks is actually his father.

Heroic Tier Feats

ALMIGHTY RESILIENCE [AASIMAR]

Prerequisite Aasimar

Benefit You gain lightning resistance equal to your radiant resistance of 5 + 1/2 your level.

INSIGHTFUL RAPTURE [AASIMAR]

Prerequisite Aasimar

Benefit You can use Streetwise passively whenever you enter a settlement to immediately learn about the community. You can also make one Streetwise check during each extended rest within a settlement.

PRESCIENT FOCUS [AASIMAR]

Prerequisite Aasimar

Benefit You only take a -2 attack penalty for targeting a bloodied foe with superior cover or total concealment instead of the normal -5 attack penalty.

SUBLIME DENIAL [AASIMAR]

Prerequisite Aasimar

Benefit You can use your angelic defiance ability against attacks that target your Fortitude or Will defense, but the bonus that lasts until the end of your next turn only applies against the triggered defense score.

Paragon Tier Feats

CREATION TONGUE [AASIMAR]

Prerequisite 11th level, aasimar

Benefit You can speak Supernal so that listeners understand your words as if spoken in their native language. You can use Make Whole without a ritual book and can master rituals from the creation category without ever needing a ritual book to perform them.

PROPHETIC INTUITION [AASIMAR]

Prerequisite 11th level, aasimar

Benefit You gain a +2 feat bonus to passive Insight checks. When you make an Insight check, roll twice and use the higher result.

Epic Tier Feats

ANGELIC BEARING [AASIMAR]

Prerequisite 21st level, aasimar

Benefit While you are not bloodied, attackers take a -2 penalty to attack rolls against you.

Vigilant Savant

From your stance alone, I can tell that you habitually leave yourself open to highhanded feints. To be fair, you had best gird yourself against such attacks before we begin fighting.

Prerequisite Aasimar

Where most people react only to what they see, you perceive the unseen. As a vigilant savant, you sense the weaknesses that people conceal. You read the unguarded intentions of your enemies during combat, betrayed by body language, and use that knowledge to strike at their most vulnerable moments. Armed with these insights, you draw your foes into battle, countering their counterattacks with a dizzying speed, knowing what they are thinking before they realize it themselves. Those few who survive your wrath swear that you can predict the future. Truth be told, they are not entirely wrong.

PATH FEATURES

Incisive Attack (11th level) When you hit a target with an attack, you learn the keyword of one vulnerability it possesses. You learn one additional vulnerability of the creature for each additional attack that hits.

Prescient Reserve (11th level)

When you spend an action point to use an encounter power and miss all targets, your power is not expended.

Anticipated Counter (16th level)

You can make two immediate actions per round instead of one.

PENETRATING STARE (Vigilant Savant Attack 11)

You single out an opponent with an unnerving look that makes it feel utterly transparent.

Encounter ♦ **Divine**

Minor Action

Close burst 10

Target One creature in burst

Attack Intelligence +4 vs. Will, Wisdom +4 vs. Will, or Charisma +4 vs. Will (Increase to +6 bonus at 21st level)

Hit The target grants combat advantage against your attacks and gains vulnerability to all damage you deal equal to your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier (save ends both)

FORESEEN ASSAULT (Vigilant Savant Utility 12)

You wait for your opponent to begin attacking before unleashing a devastating stratagem.

Encounter

Immediate Interrupt

Personal

Trigger You are attacked by a creature with a lower initiative than you

Target The attacking creature

Effect You can attack the creature with an at-will attack power or an encounter attack power or perform a move action

OBSERVANT STRIKE (Vigilant Savant Attack 20)

You pay close attention to the combat stance of your opponent in search of a weakness.

Daily ♦ **Divine, Martial or Psychic Standard Action**

Implement or Weapon

Target One creature

Attack Strength vs. AC (melee) or Dexterity vs. AC (ranged) or Wisdom +2 vs. Reflex

Hit 2[W] + Strength modifier damage (melee) or 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage (ranged) or 2d10 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage

Miss Half damage

Effect You make an Insight check to sense the motives of your target; if you succeed, repeat the attack Ω

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This screenshot shows a detailed statblock for Hakkon Truesilver, a Male Human Barbarian 4, Cleric 3 - CL7 - CR 6. It includes a table of ability scores (STR 12, DEX 12, CON 16, INT 11, WIS 16, CHA 12) with modifiers, a table of saving throws (Fortitude +12, Reflex +3, Will +7), and a table of skills (Acrobatics +4, Appraise +0, Bluff +1, Climb +7, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +4, Fly +7, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +2, Linguistics +9, Perception +2, Ride +2, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +5, Spellcraft +4, Stealth +4, Survival +9, Swim +1). It also shows armor class (18), base attack (+6), and initiative (+1).

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Prince of Wolves

By James L. Sutter

Art by Eric Belisle

For half-elf Pathfinder Varian Jeggare and his devil-blooded assistant Radovan, things are rarely as they seem. Yet not even the notorious crime-solving duo is prepared for what they find when a search for a missing Pathfinder takes them into the mist-shrouded mountains of gothic Ustalav.

Beset on all sides by noble intrigue, mysterious locals, and the deadly creatures of the night, Varian and Radovan must use both sword and spell to track the strange rumors to their source and uncover a secret of unimaginable proportions. It'll take more than merely solving a mystery to finish this job, for shadowy forces have taken note of the pair's investigations and are set on making sure neither man gets out of Ustalav alive...

Prince of Wolves by Dave Gross is the debut novel in the new Pathfinder Tales line from Paizo Publishing, launching at Gen Con Indy 2010. Set in the Pathfinder Chronicles campaign setting, each book in the line endeavors to take readers deep into the world of Golarion, offering both entertaining adventures for casual readers and gaming-table inspiration for GMs. In *Prince of Wolves*, Dave Gross brings readers a classic fantasy-horror romp complete with werewolves, vampires, and dangerous cultists, all through the eyes of a foppish half-elf lord and his cynically good-humored tiefling bodyguard (see KQ's review of the book on page 54).

Numerous new characters, magic items, spells, and other ideas ripe for a GM's harvest are introduced in this tale. A few of these elements are presented here together with new rules and statistics for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

Radovan, Hellspawn Bodyguard

This rakishly handsome man is built like a wrestler and wears a fancy leather jacket and expensive boots. Beneath blond hair, his features are fiendishly angular, and his mouth opens wider than it should to display rows of jagged fangs.

RADOVAN **CR 6**

XP 2,400

Male tiefling rogue 5/monk 2
CG Medium outsider (native)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.;
Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 45 (7 HD; 2d8+5d8+14)

Fort +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee Big Knife +9 (1d6/19–20), bite +2 (1d6+1) or unarmed strike +7 (1d6+1), bite +2 (1d6+1)

Ranged masterwork heavy crossbow +8 (1d10–1/19–20 for silver bolts) or masterwork silver dagger +8 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks devil bite, flurry of blows, sneak attack +3d6, stunning fist (2/day, DC 14)

TACTICS

Before Combat Though he prefers to avoid conflict through the use of the Intimidate skill, Radovan is a canny fighter. He does his best to get the drop on opponents, using Stealth to set up a sneak attack or striking first while the enemy is off-guard.

During Combat Radovan constantly places himself between danger and his friends or any innocents who may be present, even if it's disadvantageous for him personally to do so. He prefers to fight with his beloved Big Knife, adding bite attacks as necessary to help demoralize foes, and uses Quick Draw

to fling concealed throwing knives at ranged enemies with deadly accuracy. When all else fails, he strikes out with the bony spurs on his knees and elbows in debilitating unarmed strikes.

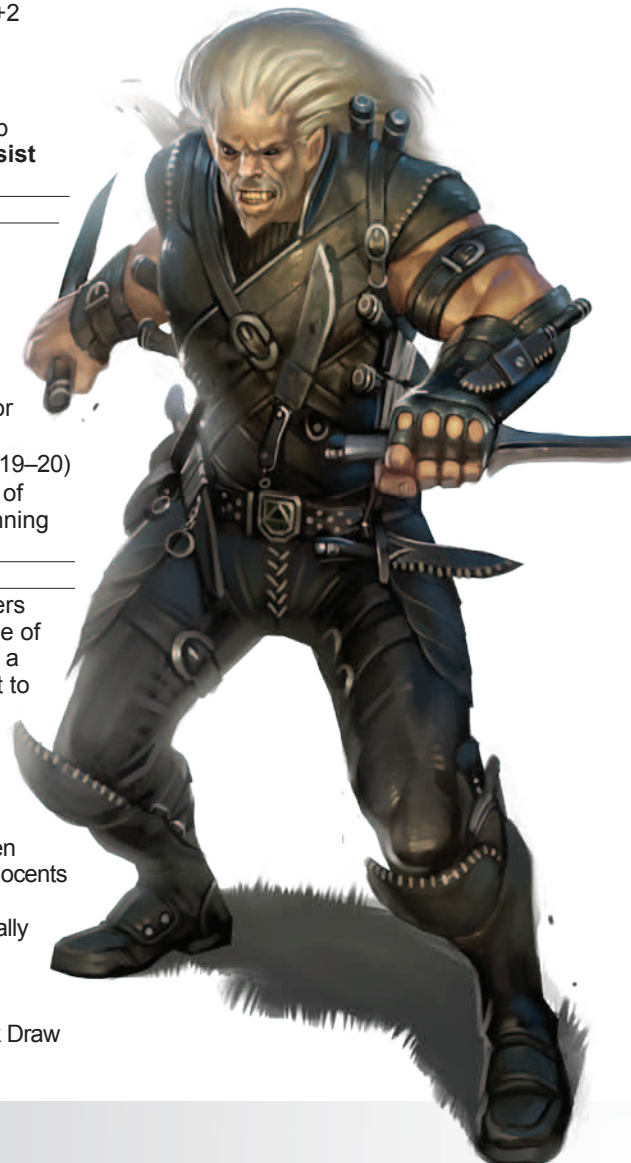
Morale Radovan is a bodyguard by both profession and inclination and only flees if everyone in his party can do so. While any of his friends remain behind, Radovan fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dazzling Display, Deflect Arrows, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Quick Draw, Stunning Fist, Weapon



Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)
Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +0, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +13, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Linguistics +5, Perception +11, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +15, Survival +2; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Bluff, +4 Intimidate, +2 Stealth

Languages Common, Infernal, Pathfinder Sign Language

SQ devil bite, fiendish sorcery, rogue talents (finesse rogue, resiliency), trapfinding +2

Gear Big Knife (masterwork alchemical silver short sword), expensive boots, masterwork heavy crossbow (20 alchemical silver bolts), masterwork leather armor, 5 masterwork silver daggers, masterwork thieves' tools; 200 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Devil Bite (Ex) Radovan has an oversized mouth full of fangs as a mark of his infernal heritage, giving him a natural bite attack as a secondary attack and a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks. This replaces the normal tiefling ability to cast *darkness* as a spell-like ability.

Fiendish Sorcery (Ex) Tiefling sorcerers with the Abyssal or Infernal bloodline treat their Charisma score as 2 points higher for all sorcerer class abilities.

Always ready with a quip or a knife, the tiefling Radovan has long played bodyguard to Chelish count and Pathfinder Varian Jeggare (whom he calls “the boss”), protecting the half-elf from a host of horrors—occasionally including his own self-destructive tendencies. Fiendishly handsome in the most literal sense of the word, Radovan lacks the usual horns, hooves, or tail of a tiefling and, instead, bears fearsome fangs and jaws that open far wider than they should. (While his “little smile” often makes him a hit with the ladies, his true grin has been described as “a drawer full of good silverware.”)

Sold into slavery at an early age, Radovan made his way into the Goatherds street gang in the streets of Egorian, capital of devil-worshipping Cheliox, before being taken in by his current employer and showed how to turn his formidable talents for combat and theft toward more noble purposes.

Fun-loving, sarcastic, and unafraid to get his hands dirty when the situation calls for a fight, Radovan is deeply loyal to his friends, and happy to fight and die in their service—after all, it's his job.

Radovan makes a perfect NPC for parties who need a little more muscle or for GMs looking for a contact with either the Pathfinder Society or the underworld in places like Cheliox or Ustalav. Though his tiefling blood makes it harder for him to run in higher social circles, few can match Radovan's street smarts. He might recruit a party to help him solve a murder, bust up a gang's protection racket, explore an ancient tomb for the Pathfinder Society, or rescue Jeggare from a trap laid by the duo's rivals.

Steal Book

The *steal book* spell has long been popular among espionage agents and ruthless scholars of all sorts—including the less-scrupulous members of the Pathfinder Society. Though occasionally used to repair defaced or incomplete texts, the spell is more often used by thieves seeking to swipe valuable information, heedless of the often ancient and priceless texts they destroy in the process.

STEAL BOOK

School divination; **Level** bard 3, inquisitor 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target one book touched

Duration permanent

Saving Throw Fortitude negates (object); **Spell Resistance** yes (object)

Often used by bards, spies, and arcane scholars to steal important texts without alerting their owners, *steal book* allows you to copy the contents of one book, folio, scroll, or other text to a blank one of sufficient size. In doing so, the original pages are wiped blank, though any covers or binding remain unchanged. Differences in size between the original and the blank folio don't matter, though the blank folio that the information is being transferred to must have an equal or greater amount of space (in number of pages or inches of scroll) or else any text that overflows the document is lost forever.

This spell cannot transfer magical writing (such as a wizard's spellbook or a magical scroll). At GM's discretion, the spell can restore lost information, such as a page obscured by spill wine, text erased by magic or mundane means, or even pages lost to fire or other damage.

When cast from a scroll, the beginning of the stolen text appears on the *steal book* scroll until you select a target book for the text to appear. The stolen text glitters and sparkles while it remains on the scroll.

Riffle Scrolls

Possibly invented or rediscovered by the Chelish Pathfinder Varian Jeggare in his search to find magic that fits his particular arcane disability—a tendency to get violently nauseated when casting a spell—*riffle scrolls* are a new type of magic item that operate on a physical configuration of standard scrolls. They are not a single scroll on which a spell is written out and then read; instead, *riffle scrolls* are small flipbook-style chapbooks, and each page contains one or more arcane characters. These booklets are activated by holding them between thumb and forefinger riffling the pages as a standard action, causing the runes and characters to flow together and trigger the spell.

Riffle scrolls are not scrolls in the sense of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game definition of “scrolls”; they are single-use, use-activated items, and you must have any material components or foci necessary for the spell on hand. Creating a *riffle scroll* requires knowledge of the desired spell and the Craft Wondrous Item and Silent Spell feats; the cost of a *riffle scroll* is the same as a potion of the desired spell.

Corpselight Rapier

When the dread lich known as Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant, originally began his campaign to conquer all of Golarion, the first nation to fall was the land of Ustalav. Though many brave Ustalavs fought back, their armies were slaughtered, and the Tyrant called up their shattered corpses as the first of his undead minions.

Today, centuries after the Shining Crusade defeated and imprisoned the

Whispering Tyrant in Gallowspire, Ustalav remains a haunted land, beset by the ghosts of the past and the degeneracy of its own nobles. Yet a few remember that their ancestors fought against the tyrant's crushing hand, and they bear the legacy of their ancient resistance.

The *corpselight rapier* is one such hallmark of the past, its blade forged specifically to battle the Whispering Tyrant's undead and blasphemous legions. Only Count Galdana of Amaans is known to carry a *corpselight rapier*—an heirloom of his long and distinguished family line—but it's certainly possible that his is just one of several blades created in the dark days of Ustalav's fall. It only remains for heroes to locate others.

CORPSELIGHT RAPIER

Aura moderate conjuration; **CL** 8th
Slot none; **Price** 21,320 gp; **Weight** 2 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This +2 *undead-bane rapier* is ornate and covered with thousands of tiny spirals of Pharasma, with the tail of a single large spiral stretching half the length of the blade. Designed for



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hunting and dispatching the undead, the unsheathed blade glows when any undead are within a 60-ft. radius. Unfortunately, its antipathy with undead also acts as a beacon, and undead within 1 mile of the blade can sense its presence and direction, even when the sword is sheathed.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *detect undead*, *summon monster I*;
Cost 10,820 gp

Chastisement

Sometimes, more than stern words are needed to keep parishioners in line, and so many clerics have learned a useful orison called *chastisement*. While the spell does little damage, it does effortlessly and painfully sting even the most formidable opponent—a useful reminder to arrogant warriors and wizards that the gods maintain power over everyone, great and small.

Temple elders also consider this simple spell a valuable teaching tool when dealing with obstinate acolytes, useful in combat against well-protected but physically weak opponents, and—in the case of *Prince of Wolves*—handy for priestesses of Desna looking to reprimand overly salacious tieflings.

CHASTISEMENT

School evocation (force); **Level** cleric 0, oracle 0

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components S

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target one creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **Spell**

Resistance no

You send a single spark of brilliant force flying at your target, dealing 1 hp damage. It is blocked by force effects and any effect that blocks *magic missile*. This spark strikes unerringly, even if the target is in melee combat; if the target has total cover or total concealment, the spell is blocked. Specific parts of a creature can't be singled out. Objects are not damaged by the spell.

RING OF CHASTISEMENT

Aura faint evocation; **CL** 1st

Slot ring; **Price** 900 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

On command, you may use the spell *chastisement* as a swift action.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Forge Ring, *chastisement*;
Cost 450 gp

Arms of Faith

Arms of faith are magical tattoos originally popularized by wandering clerics of Desna, who sometimes use matched pairs of them to produce their famous starknives at a moment's notice. They are more widely known now, and used by divine warriors to ensure that they are never without a weapon to help them battle their enemies.

ARM OF FAITH

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 3rd

Slot none; **Price** 6,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

An *arm of faith* is a magical tattoo in the shape of a deity's favored weapon or holy symbol, usually inscribed on the inside of a wrist. By snapping the wrist (as a free action), the tattoo's owner can conjure a physical replica of his deity's favored weapon, such as a longsword, hammer, or starknife. The weapon produced is aligned to one aspect of the deity's alignment (chaotic, evil, good, or lawful); this alignment is specified at the time of tattooing and can never be changed.

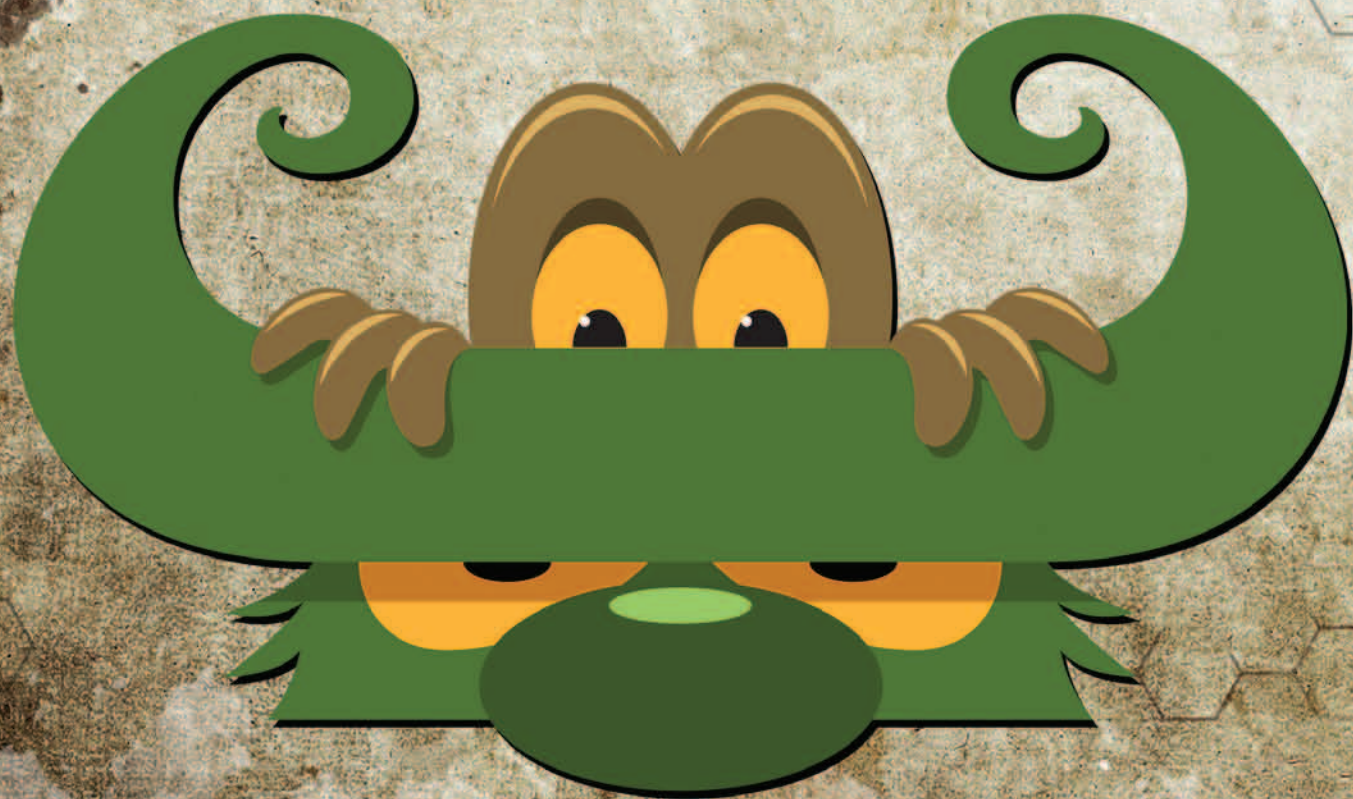
Each tattoo can produce only one weapon at a time. If you give the weapon to someone, it retains its properties. The tattoo's power is an instantaneous conjuration (summoning) effect; the weapon does not vanish in an antimagic field and is not subject to effects that ward against summoned monsters.

As a standard action, you can activate the tattoo again to end the conjuring, even if the weapon is in another creature's possession at the time, but a weapon dismissed this way cannot be conjured again for 1 minute. A weapon conjured by the tattoo can be enhanced by *magic weapon* and similar spells, though the weapon loses these benefits as soon as it is dismissed. The weapon can be crafted with permanent magic enhancements (such as the *flaming* weapon property), retaining the enhancements each summoning, but the weapon must remain in physical form for the duration of the crafting.

Bearers of an *arm of faith* tattoo must remain in good standing with their god, or the item loses all its abilities.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *align weapon*; **Cost** 3,000 gp Ω



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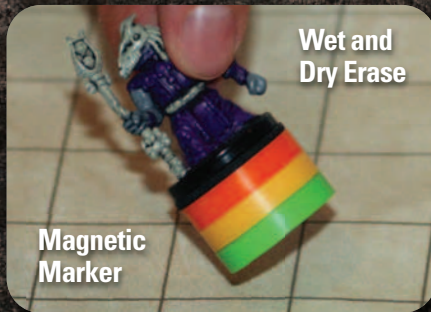
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Ecology of the Tengu

By R. William Thompson

Art by Pat Loboyko and Rhiannon Rasmussen-Silverstein

Looking into a tengu's eyes, you see great responsibility and the timeless urge to survive, glinting deep within. A tengu is as lethal and dangerous as any other humanoid, but these ebony creatures carry both a great spiritual weight and a mysterious past.

Tengu and their kin are generally misunderstood and overlooked; others often consider them either quirky or unnecessary to most of society. With personalities as varied as any human's and a culture many times older, the eccentric tengu are often underestimated and misrepresented.

Physiology

The common tengu (or lesser *karasu tengu*) is a bipedal humanoid with avian features, including a large beak, taloned hands and feet, and a thick covering of feathers. A tengu's face resembles that of a great raven or crow, but it lacks wings and has a much more solid frame. Most are pitch-black although a smattering have been seen with white and red flecks either firsthand or in the spiritual

visions of spellcasters and oracles. The legends of rare albinos, so far, appear to be just that—legends.

Tengu stand roughly 5 ft. tall and, because of their hollow bones, weigh just 95 – 105 lb. Though they have no wings and cannot fly, their physiology is strikingly similar to that of true avians.

They are omnivorous, eating almost anything, but they prefer raw meat and field grains, such as corn, soy, and alfalfa. Tengu even scavenge days-old carrion, repulsing most humanoids, who consider them savage. However, this could not be further from the truth.

Hatching, Mating, and Nesting

Tengu hatch from eggs; their inaccessible nests are built by the father, preferably atop a high building, abandoned structure, or tall tree. Though they receive no racial climbing bonus, most tengu are good climbers by the time they are old enough to mate.

Mating happens in the spring and lasts for a season; if no offspring

result, the pair usually separates. After conceiving, the female tengu immediately knows of her pregnancy and informs her mate. The male then builds her a new nest in a location of her choosing within the 7 – 9 weeks between conception and egg laying. During this time, the female rarely lets the male tengu rest until the nest is to her liking. This can take three or four attempts if the male is inexperienced in nest-building, but male tengu are persistent when it comes to pleasing their mate.

Once the nest is made and the female has laid her 1 – 5 eggs, they hatch 3 – 4 weeks later. Immediately after hatching, the infant tengu can speak simple words, move clumsily, and climb somewhat less clumsily due to their well-developed talons.

Leaving the Nest

Before a juvenile tengu can climb away from its nest, it is given a shard of glass or metal or a piece of mirror, and its parent provokes it into a rage, inciting

the youth into attacking. When a cut has been made—the “first cut”—the juvenile tengu may leave the roost and other adult tengu teach it the skills of blade-fighting.

Tengu mature to adulthood within 10 years and can live to be up to 110 years old. Many tales say that death need not be the end of a tengu's life, and that many well-known tengu ascend directly into a higher state of existence. Some may even share the planar existence of their relatives, the greater karasu tengu and greater yamabushi tengu.

Sociology and Culture

A tengu's life revolves around several milestones: its birth, first cut, first fall, and the annual celebration of its “rebirth” from its first fall. The first fall is a fall that breaks a limb; somewhat similar to one's birth, it is a celebration of death and rebirth. Annual rebirth ceremonies of important tengu or a flock elder can mean great jubilation, festivities, amazing contests of skill and combat, martial arts, and performances.

First cut is the first time a tengu manages a cut against their parent or mentor—often a father—once given their first blade. They often keep this small edged item throughout their lives as a memento of the day the tengu earned its freedom from the roost. Some tengu discard their first blade out of either spite or apathy, but all tengu keep a blade of some form on their person. In the best cases, this is a very fine set of masterwork katana and wakizashi.

In some cities, tengu roosts are considered nothing more than feathery thieves' guilds (or “murders”). This is only partially true—many tengu communal roosts are simple family dens for those who obey the law of the lands they occupy. However, tengu's understanding of the laws of ownership is somewhat skewed: “innocent” kleptomaniac of shiny, colorful objects is commonplace even for law-abiding tengu citizens.

Rogue Tengu

Lawful tengu societies—whether of their own sovereign state or in the regions of other races—operate under the spiritual

code and hierarchy of their spiritual origin. This code, known as *hanedo* (hah-nay-do) or the way of the feather, is upheld by greater tengu—greater karasu and yamabushi tengu—who share the lesser karasu's ancestry.

The best-known roosts are those ruled by exiled or rogue tengu with previous offenses in tengu culture. Tengu which have murdered another tengu, those who hold animosity toward their spirit world brethren, those who abandon their roosting mates, those who have slain with their first cut, or never made a cut or had a first fall could all find themselves exiled or stuck on the very outskirts of tengu society. Exile from a tengu flock is shameful, and these outcasts often become vengeful bandits among their own kind.

Because lesser karasu tengu personalities vary as much as any other race, they can have any alignment. They adapt to any local urban or natural region they occupy although their presence in cities is not always welcome. Those who obey the code of *hanedo* often seek work among the local clergy, protecting holy sites and temples.

Tengu encountered in combat or in passing are always defined by their character class levels and have no racial HD. Good or neutral-aligned tengu tend to choose defensive combat feats focused on their blades while evil-aligned tengu choose those feats and abilities that best serve rogues and assassins or those which deal more damage.

Tengu Philosophy and Character

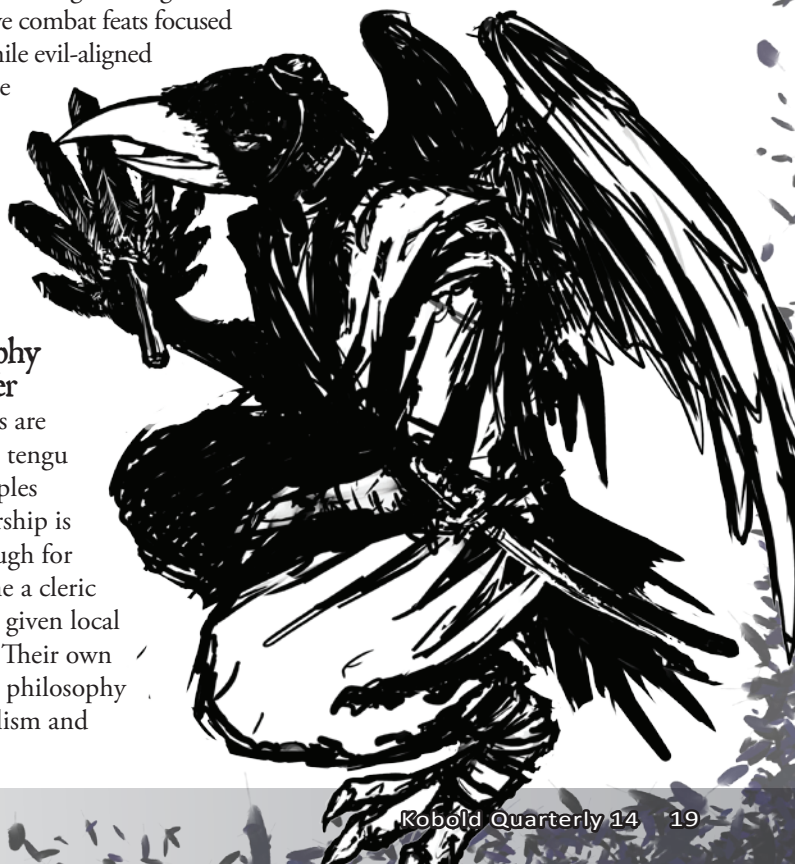
Tengu spellcasters are rare although the tengu fondness for temples and places of worship is often reason enough for a tengu to become a cleric or paladin of any given local deity or religion. Their own beliefs enshrine a philosophy of pagan spiritualism and

development of the physical body and higher self that respects divinity of all forms. They frequently take on local customs, traditions, and beliefs to fit in with their surrounding community.

Observers consider tengu vain and prideful. If you shower compliments on a tengu, it will invariably respond in one of three ways: those who follow tengu beliefs and customs shrug them off and appear humble or modest, those vain tengu accept and enjoy the compliments with guilty pleasure, and those curious or paranoid tengu will regard you with suspicion, possibly expecting a personal test or challenge. Not all compliments ruffle a tengu's feathers in all the right ways. Ancestral tengu culture holds that vanity and pride should be treated severely, typically through shame and acts of humility.

Insults and Linguistics

Karasu tengu elders and greater tengu call maverick or bad-natured tengu “kenku” and tell them that they are part of an “ill murder” or “bad flock.” This insult leads some to believe that the tengu are also called kenku, but it is in fact a derogatory term. It could even be the last word you ever speak if in the wrong company.



Tengu in Golarion

By James Jacobs

In the world of Golarion, tengu hail from the continent of Tian-Xia although they can be encountered throughout the world. In the Inner Sea region, tengu tend to be displaced creatures who have been forced to rely on themselves to eke out livings as best they can—they tend to live in lower-class parts of human cities and work as freelance thieves and mercenaries.

Secret tengu criminal and mercenary guilds are rumored to exist in several cities throughout the region, including places as varied as Magnimar in Varisia, Hajoth Hakados in Numeria, Quantum in Nex, Azir in Rahadoum, and even Absalom. Their presence is particularly well established in the Shackles, where they often serve on ships or run rookeries and guilds in the various lawless cities found there.

A few pirates see the keeping of a tengu “mascot” as a way to keep good luck, for the superstition is that tengu “absorb” the bad luck that would otherwise affect the ship and her crew. Tengu are aware of this belief and are usually amused by what they feel is yet another silly humanoid superstition—most are simply too happy to have a place aboard a ship. Certainly, their skill at swordplay and language make them a natural fit for a ship that sails through dangerous waters and visits numerous ports of call, and most tengu find themselves quickly achieving important roles in a ship as a translator or bodyguard. Tengu generally worship Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Norgorber, or Nethys—all faiths that generally welcome excess or criminal behavior.

Tengu are approximately as powerful as other core races like humans, elves, and halflings—with GM permission, a player can select tengu as a player race. Of course, in most societies, a tengu will be regarded as a strange curiosity at best or a suspected thief or monster at worst—tengu adventurers often form strong bonds of friendship with their boon companions, if only because of the numerous times their companions need to vouch for the tengu's behavior in cities.

Tengu are as proficient with words and language as with any blade, and tend to be chatty. They can easily decipher strange texts and translate foreign languages. Their ability to quickly pick up new languages is unrivalled among the humanoid races, and they often serve as translators. Tengu seem to especially thrill at learning those strange and archaic languages not in common use (such as those described in the “Ancient Tongues” article in this issue). It is said that the greater tengu are masters of words and have access to ancient and supernatural languages unknown to most.

Tengu hanedo tradition states that tengu must protect local temples and keep places of worship and reverent holy sites peaceful, regardless of their creed or motivations. Protection of these sites—whatever their nature—is highly honorable. Both good and rogue tengu fervently protect sacred sites.

Tengu Origins

Though lesser karasu tengu are native to the material plane and treated as humanoids, their ancestors and relatives are native to the Spirit World. The greater karasu tengu are very similar to their cousins except with large flight-capable wings, various special abilities, and an almost insatiable thirst for honorable bladed combat.

The strange yet still related goblinoid variety of the karasu tengu is the greater yamabushi tengu. This slightly smaller, long-nosed being is known primarily as being the tengu slayer of vanity and narcissism along with its peer, the winged karasu. Coming from their spiritual realm, the greater tengu are often encountered in mountainous, forested, and rural locations near lesser tengu settlements or roosts. They uphold the code of hanedo in tengu society and watch over their lesser brethren—in many ways like older siblings.

Tengu were brought to the material plane long ago; their eggs fetched a

high price wherever the bird-people might be thought exotic, useful, or entertaining. At one time, common tengu eggs fetched up to 75 gp, but since tengu hatchlings grow up fiercely independent and strong willed, they do not make good slave laborers, and many escaped. Most young and rebellious tengu ran away at the first realization of their indentured servitude. They have remained close, however, and blend into society as well as natives in cities that once sold their ancestors on the market. Greater tengu still watch over their relatives out of an ancient loyalty to their common heritage and customs.

Powerful tengu often perform missions in the name of great divine powers or their emissaries. They act as messengers, diplomats, and mercenaries in addition to being spiritual guardians to certain beings all over the cosmos. Greater tengu are native to other planes, and treated as outsiders with the extraplanar subtype.

If your campaign does not allow for a Spirit World that coexists over the material plane, they could instead be native to any good, lawful, or neutral plane. In campaigns that allow for a Spirit World, tengu make their homes in as the plane of Tengudo.

Tengu Feats

Tengu enjoy a number of racial feats and powers.

TENGU MIMICRY [GENERAL]

Prerequisites Tengu, Linguistics 6 rank
Benefit You can recreate any sounds of the surrounding environment with perfect clarity and detail, as well as street noises, animal calls, natural sounds (such as wind or leaves), and voices with accents in any language that you can speak.

When duplicating a specific person's voice, you must make a Bluff check; creatures familiar with the voice being imitated make opposed Sense Motive checks against your Bluff. You receive a +2 competence bonus if you have spoken with the imitated person for at least 30 minutes.

TENGU TEMPLE WATCHER [GENERAL, COMBAT]

Prerequisites Tengu, BAB +4, Perception 6 ranks

Special You must have been hired and charged by an elder to protect a specific sacred site, temple, shrine, or religious group.

Benefit As a temple watcher, you gain a +1 bonus to all attacks, a +2 bonus on saves against enchantments, and a +4 bonus to Perception checks when made within 300 ft. of the temple, religious event, or holy site you have been charged with protecting. A tengu fighter may take this as a class bonus feat.

Prestige Class: Tengu Streetsinger

Tengu streetsingers blend the sounds of urban and rural landscapes with their own take on how things should—and do—sound. They are masters of ventriloquism, and the paragons of their ranks are raucous vocal illusionists in the cities and wilderness. They can arise from the select of the tengu inner circle and rogue leaders within murders and local underground rings or from the simple shepherds and wanderers mimicking the sounds of the wilderness or of neighborhood streets.

ROLE

Observers of life's many sounds, tengu streetsingers use this to their advantage in all aspects of life. In combat, they can disorient their opponents and create major illusions with their vocal abilities. They can keep themselves safe and blend into rural, urban, or wilderness areas, or they can subtly influence the perceptions of others.

ALIGNMENT

Streetsingers can be of any alignment although those found in urban locales are most often chaotic and neutral in alignment. Those exiled due to tengu murders occasionally become streetsingers. These maverick tengu attack the senses swiftly, disorienting foes, while their good counterparts can be found nearly anywhere, blending in—naturally.

HD d8

REQUIREMENTS

Race Tengu

BAB +3

Abilities Wis 12

Feats Tengu Mimicry

Skills Bluff 8 ranks, Knowledge (local or nature) 3 ranks, Perform (act, comedy, oratory, or sing) 3 ranks

CLASS SKILLS

The tengu streetsinger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Acrobatics (Dex), Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Fly (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge [Any] (Int), Linguistics (Int), Perception (Wis), Perform [Oratory/Vocalist/Singer/Imitator] (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis)

Skill Ranks/Level 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class traits of the tengu streetsinger prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency

You are proficient with all simple weapons; additionally, as a tengu,



Table 1: Tengu Streetsinger

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	AC Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	Tengu ventriloquism	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+2	Confusing sounds	+1
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+2	Enthralling sounds, ghost sound	+2
4th	+3	+1	+1	+3	Ill shriek	+3

Class Skills Acrobatics (Dex), Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Fly (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge [Any] (Int), Linguistics (Int), Perception (Wis), Perform [Oratory/Vocalist/Singer/Imitator] (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis)



you are proficient with any sword-like weapon. You are proficient with light and medium armor and shields excluding tower shields.

AC Bonus (Ex) You add your Wisdom modifier to your AC. Additionally, you gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC of 1 less than your tengu streetsinger level.

Tengu Ventriloquism (Ex) At 1st level, you can throw your voice up to 100 ft. away 2/day without moving your beak. Any creature listening may make an opposed Perception check at a -8 penalty against your Bluff check. If the check fails, the creature believes the sounds came from the false location. If you lose this check, the listening creature may make a second Perception check at a -4 penalty to notice the sound's true origin. If they succeed on both checks, they realize the sounds were fabricated and came from another location.

If this ability is combined with any other ability or action requiring your voice, your Bluff checks take a -4 penalty. This is a sonic effect. At 2nd level, you can perform this ability 3/day, and at 4th level, you can perform this ability at will.

Confusing Sounds (Ex) At 2nd level, your mimicry can baffle and confuse opponents with strange and disorienting sounds. You make a Perform check, and any opponent within 30 ft./2 HD (maximum 120 ft.) is confused for 1d4 rounds (Will DC 10 +1/2 your HD + your Cha modifier negates). If you use your voice for any other reason while using this ability, you take a -2 penalty to your Perform checks. This is a sonic effect.

Enthralling Sounds (Su) At 3rd level, your raucous noise can fascinate a creature as a supernatural

sonic effect. You can enthrall your opponents, affecting all designated opponents within 60 ft. as a full-round action (Perform DC 14). Creatures are fascinated for 1d4 rounds (Will DC 10 +1/2 HD + Cha modifier negates). If you take any other action requiring your voice, the effect ends immediately. This is a sonic effect.

Ghost Sound (Sp) At 3rd level, you may use *ghost sound* at will, as the spell (CL equals your level; save DC is charisma-based).

Ill Shriek (Ex) At 4th level, you may emit a loud, piercing shriek every 1d4+2 rounds. Creatures within 50 ft. are deafened for 1d4+1 rounds and take 2d6 nonlethal damage (Fortitude DC 10 +1/2 your HD + your Cha modifier negates deafness and halves damage).

Other tengu streetsingers are immune to this effect.

New Equipment

Whether or not the tengu had anything to do with the first construction of the katana and wakizashi, these weapons have become a signature of theirs.

SAMURAI BLADE SET, KATANA AND WAKIZASHI

These samurai blade sets are crafted by master smith monks of at least 15th level who study the philosophy of the samurai and know the ancient code of hanedo. Any plagiarized items or replicas are treated as a longsword (katana) and short sword (wakizashi) and do not receive the bonuses or statistics presented here. A set is sometimes given as noble gifts to prominent, heroic, or otherwise notable aristocrats, as well as renowned

political or military leaders.

Samurai Set Katana Created as a matched set with an accompanying blade, the wakizashi, this exotic weapon can be handled with one or two hands and is weighted to be steady in both techniques. Crafted with immense skill by a studied artisan, this masterwork longsword equivalent grants an attack bonus and bonus to damage rolls when used in tandem with its partner blade in the hands of a skilled combatant.

If you use a samurai set katana to sunder another weapon, you receive a +1 bonus to your CMB and an additional +1 damage to the other weapon on a successful attack (that is, 1d8+2 damage for a medium sword and wielder). You may use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to attack rolls with a katana of appropriate size, even though it isn't a light weapon.

Samurai Set Wakizashi Created as a matched set with a katana (see above), this light martial weapon is a masterwork shortsword with a slightly broader blade than its katana counterpart. It grants a double-masterwork attack bonus and bonus to damage rolls when used in tandem with its partner blade.

If you use a samurai set wakizashi to sunder another weapon, you receive a +1 bonus to your CMB and an additional +1 bonus to damage dealt to the other weapon on a successful attack (that is, 1d6+3 damage for a medium sword and wielder). It is an honorable blade, always paired with a katana, and the two are a symbol of honor for any samurai or lawful nobleperson who wields or owns them.

Table 2: Samurai Blade Set, Katana and Wakizashi

Weapon	Cost ¹	Attack Bonus ²	Damage ³			Critical	Weight	Type
			Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Dmg (L)			
<i>Exotic Light Melee Weapon</i>								
Wakizashi	710 gp	+2	1d4+2	1d6+2	1d8+2	18-20/x2	4 lb.	P or S
<i>Exotic One or Two Handed Melee Weapon</i>								
Katana	515 gp	+1	1d6+1	1d8+1	2d6+1	19-20/x3	7 lb.	P or S

(1) These weapons are never sold separately except on the black market and are always created together by a master artisan at a total cost of at least 1,225 gp.

(2) The bonus to attacks is applied only when you have both weapons on your person and are proficient with both of them. This does not stack with magical enhancement bonus.

(3) The bonus to damage rolls is only applied when you have both weapons on your person and are proficient with both of them. This additional damage is not multiplied in a critical hit. This bonus goes up when used to sunder another weapon (see description text).

Greater Tengu, Yamabushi

This strangely shaped, stout, and winged humanoid has somewhat goblinoid features and an incredibly long phallic nose. It wields the dual blades of the samurai with ease.

“King Sojobo expects all tengu to obey the laws of our tradition and to uphold the protection of the faiths. Neither you nor I is exempt from such responsibility. Now get back to your roost before I cut you your last cut.”

The strangely shaped yamabushi tengu shares many of the traits of its tengu brethren excluding their avian features. Their long limbs and eccentric form grants them an extended reach beyond that of other humanoid sized beings. Excelling in bladed combat and known for their strict adherence to customs, traditions, and tengu bushido, the yamabushi are mostly seen as the leaders of the tengu races. Their King Sojobo is a yamabushi of immense power whose domain in the Spirit World sanctuary of Tengudo gives him access to the oversight and protection of all tengu-kind.

GREATER YAMABUSHI TENGU (CR 7)

XP 3,200

LN Medium outsider (air, earth, extraplanar, lawful, tengu)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +13

Aura calm (as *calm emotions*, DC 15, 40-ft. range)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +4 Dex, +1 Dodge, +3 natural)

hp 59 (7d10+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

DR 10/silver and chaotic; **Immune** petrification, polymorph; **Resist** acid 5, cold 10, electricity 5; **SR** 18

Weaknesses mirror taboo

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee katana +11/+6 (1d8+2/19-20/x3; +1 attack and damage to sunder), wakizashi +11/+6 (1d6+2/18-20; +1 attack and damage to sunder)

Ranged mwk shuriken +12 (1d2+1/x2; 10-ft. range increment)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks wing baffle

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

At will—*alter self*, *ghost sound*, *major*

image, *mirror image*

3/day—*bless weapon*, *blur*, *greater invisibility* (self only), *plane shift*

1/day—*consecrate*, *gaseous form*, *mass hold person*

Spells Prepared (CL 5th)

3rd—*create food and water*

2nd—*delay poison*, *zone of truth*

1st—*detect undead*, *obscuring mist*, *remove fear*

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Mobility^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Vital Strike, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (katana)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +12, Fly +16, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +13, Linguistics +15, Perception +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +12;

Racial Modifiers

+2 Acrobatics, +4 Fly, +4 Linguistics, +2 Perception, +2 Sense Motive

samurai blade set, 25 masterwork shurikens, other treasure)

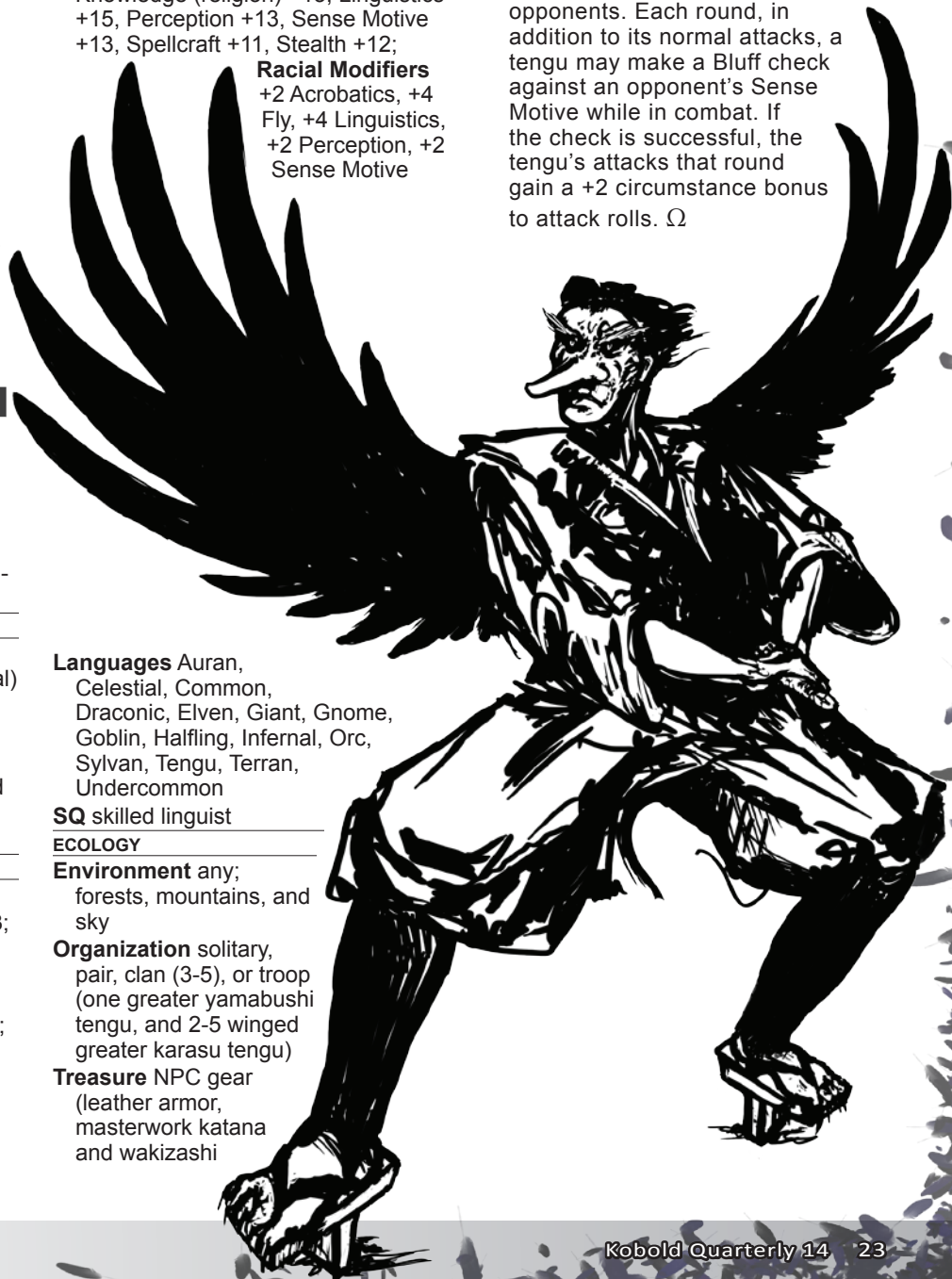
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cleric Spells (Sp) Yamabushi tengu cast divine spells as 5th-level clerics. They do not gain access to domains or other cleric abilities.

Gifted Linguist (Ex) As the tengu racial trait (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*).

Mirror Taboo (Su) Yamabushi tengu may not look at themselves in any man-made mirror (Reflex DC 20 avoids), or they take 4 Charisma damage. An *atonement* spell restores the ability damage.

Wing Baffle (Ex) A yamabushi tengu uses its wings even in combat although not to make slam attacks; it supplements its melee combat with the slaps and whips of its wings to buffet and disorient its opponents. Each round, in addition to its normal attacks, a tengu may make a Bluff check against an opponent's Sense Motive while in combat. If the check is successful, the tengu's attacks that round gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls. Ω



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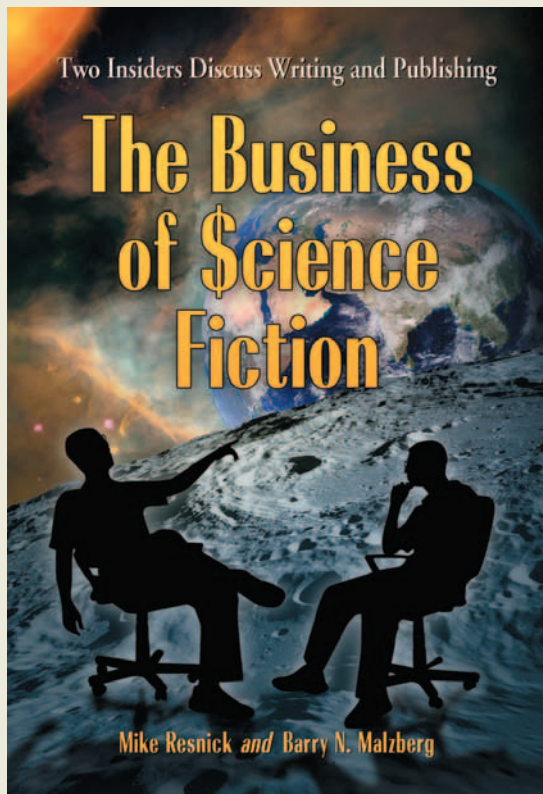


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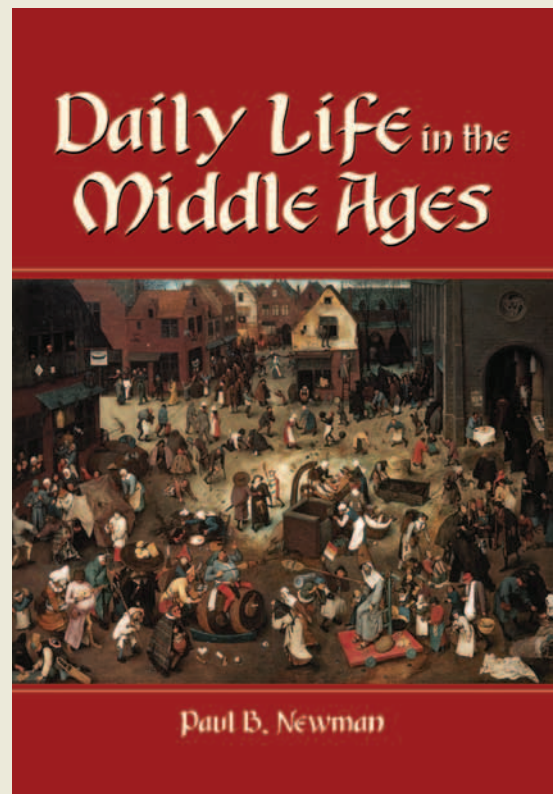
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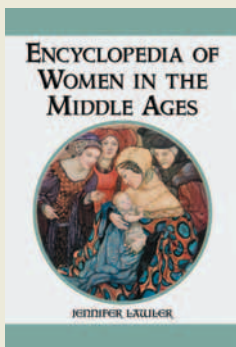


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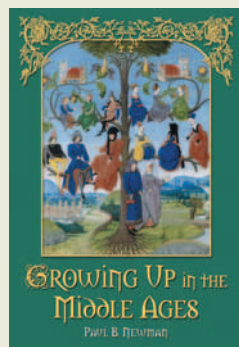


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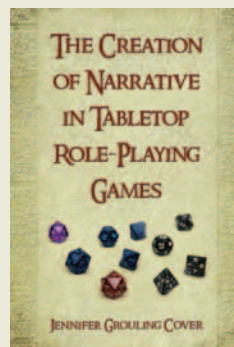
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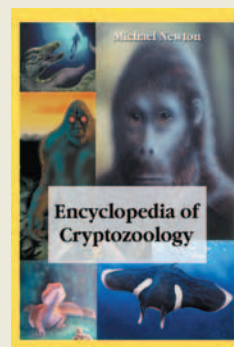
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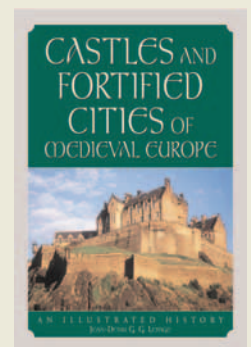
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Healing Hands

Variant Rules for Laying On Hands

By James Graham

Art by Giulio Bonasone

For many, paladins are slayers of evil—righteous crusaders who put villains to the sword to keep the innocent safe. Special mounts, holy swords, and the signature power of smite evil are the important elements for these warriors.

But these are not the paladin's only gifts. Channeling divine energy to cure the sick or injured is another crucial element that separates holy champions from other armored knights.

Lay on hands is an important ability of the paladin class. Combined with a dedicated cleric, the paladin can share in the responsibility of healing so that parties can adventure longer before needing to recuperate. Without a primary healer, the lay on hands ability allows the paladin to step in during emergencies and keep everyone alive.

With the introduction of mercies in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, the role of the paladin as a healer has been expanded. Perhaps your paladin is a warrior of peace, defending the weak, and protecting them from harm. Or maybe your paladin saw too much bloodshed in the last battle against evil and is moving down a more spiritual path.

With one or two of these feats, your paladin can provide versatile healing that

your party may desperately need. By taking more, your paladin becomes a powerful healer—able to cure almost anything.

New Feats

Any class or prestige class levels that stack with paladin levels with regard to the mercy class feature also stack for the purpose of meeting level requirements for these feats.

NEW MERCY: CHARMED

Your lay on hands ability can clear the target's clouded judgment.

Prerequisites Mercy class feature, paladin level 6th

Benefit Add the following to your list of mercies that take effect when you use your lay on hands to heal damage to one target:

Charmed—The target is no longer under the effects of any charm spell or effect, such as *charm person*. You must succeed on a dispel check (1d20 + your paladin level) against the spell or effect (DC = 11 + the spell or effect's CL) to remove it.

NEW MERCY: CONFUSED

Your touch can restore a target's befuddled mind.

Prerequisites Mercy class feature, paladin level 9th

Benefit Add the following to your list of mercies that take effect when you use your lay on hands to heal damage to one target:

Confused—The target is no longer confused.

NEW MERCY: DAZZLED

Your touch can heal the target's overstimulated eyes.

Prerequisites Mercy class feature

Benefit Add the following to your list of mercies that take effect when you use your lay on hands to heal damage to one target:

Dazzled—The target is no longer dazzled.

NEW MERCY: DEAD

Your healing touch is so powerful it can overcome death itself.

Prerequisites Mercy class feature, Extra Mercy, paladin level 18th

Benefit You may use your lay on hands ability on a creature that has died within 1 round. If the amount of damage healed brings the target's hp total to at least an amount greater than its negative Constitution score, it returns to life. If the target's hp total is still negative, it is stable. The target's body must be relatively whole, as per *raise dead*, for this ability to function.



The ability does not work on those slain by death effects. Creatures raised in this manner gain 1 temporary negative level that lasts for 1 day.

NEW MERCY: DOMINATED

Your lay on hands ability can now free your target from direct mental control.

Prerequisites Mercy class feature, must have the charmed mercy, paladin level 15th

Benefit Add the following to your list of mercies that take effect when you use your lay on hands to heal damage to one target: *Dominate*—The target is no longer under the effects of any dominate spell or effect, such as *dominate person*. You must succeed on a dispel check (1d20 + your paladin level) against the spell or effect (DC = 11 + the spell or effect's CL) to remove it.

NEW MERCY: PANICKED

Your touch can now soothe the most fearful souls.

Prerequisites Mercy class feature, must have the frightened mercy, paladin level 15th

Benefit Add the following to your list of mercies that take effect when you use your lay on hands to heal damage to one target:

Panicked—The target is no longer panicked.

NEW MERCY: PETRIFIED

With your lay on hands ability, you can soften the stone flesh of your target.

Prerequisites Mercy class feature, paladin level 15th

Benefit Add the following to your list of mercies that take effect when you use your lay on hands to heal damage to one target:

Petrified—Your lay on hands ability also acts as *stone to flesh*. This ability only functions on petrified creatures. It does not work against regular stone.

RESTORATIVE HANDS

Your lay on hands ability can heal more than just injuries.

Prerequisites Lay on hands 2d6, Extra Lay on Hands

Benefit After rolling the damage to be healed by your lay on hands ability, you may opt to reduce this amount in order to heal the target of ability damage or drain. For every 2 points you spend in this manner, you may heal the target of 1 ability damage. For every 4 points, you may heal 1 ability drain. Any remainder of the damage is applied normally.

REVITALIZING HANDS

Your lay on hands ability is so potent that you can even return lost life force.

Prerequisites lay on hands 6d6, Extra Lay on Hands, Restorative Hands

Benefit In addition to the benefit of your Restorative Hands feat, you may also reduce the amount to be healed by your lay on hands ability in order to remove temporary or permanent negative levels from the target. For every 5 points, you may remove 1 temporary negative level the target possesses and for 10 points you may remove 1 permanent negative level. Ω

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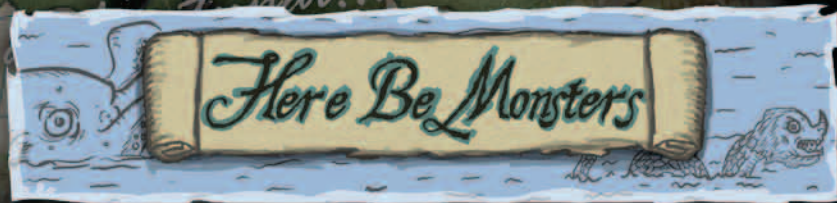
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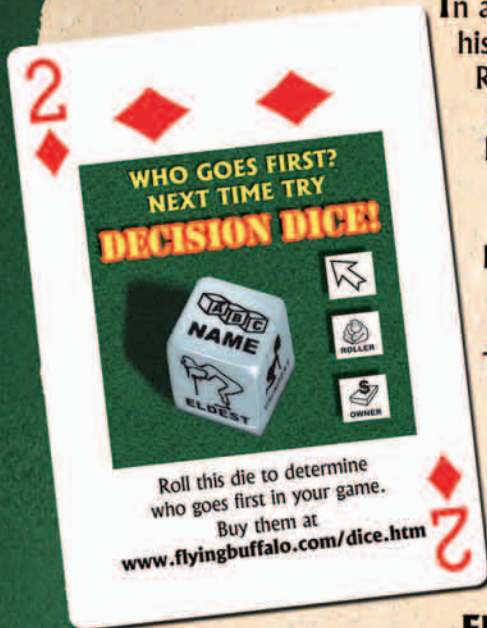
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Perfumes of Bourgund

By Stefen Styrsky

Art by Joe Slucher

For the first step, take the belly-blood of one stirge and distill it with essence of juniper and walnut oil...

—personal recipe book of Etienne
Tournesol

Visitors to the city often remark how the pennants crowning Bourgund's towers resemble her inhabitants—colorful, intricately delicate, and proud. Bourgundian men and women value their appearance and often wear garments that would be considered courtly finery elsewhere: doublets worked with silver thread, or skirts adorned with red and green stones. Even Bourgund's armies are a sight, their golden banners snapping in the wind and knights a gleaming line of steel atop horses dark as night and white as snow. Bourgund's people

enjoy spectacle more than most.

Just as remarkable are the curious smells. The rich scents of rose, hyssop, and lemon thyme follow in the wake of Bourgund's aristocrats. New visitors assume the scents are a strange national trait until they learn of the invention called perfume – and learn that some of it carries a special form of Bourgundian magic.

The Stench!

Even among the most advanced cities, the stink and stench of life pervades. Chamber pots need emptying, slaughterhouses discharge effluent, and stables require mucking. Only the wealthy can afford an apprentice-wizard to scour their bodies and homes clean, and magic-users often resent such employment.

People in Bourgund, however, and other places such as Siwal, Harkesh, Sephaya, and Zobeck, cover the floors of their homes with sprays of rose, hyssop, and other fragrant plants. The strewn material releases pleasant smells when trod upon and masks the general stink of life. Artisans, merchants, and peasants adorn themselves in dried rosebuds, lemon balm, and sachets filled with herbs and flower petals.

However, a clever Bourgundian alchemist discovered how to combine alcohol with essences of thyme, verbena, and other herbs. Thus was born perfume. The aristocrats of Bourgund flocked to the new item. They covered themselves in scents alluring and exotic and blanketed their homes to keep at bay the fumes of the outside world.

Perfumes and Special Items

Item	Price	Weight
Noisome Defeat	85 gp	—
Perfume	10 gp	—
Perfume Ring	20 gp	—
Pomander	5 gp	1/8 lb.
Spirit Gum	3 gp	—
Youth's Allure	50 gp	—
Water of Love	35 gp	—

Perfume

To manufacture perfume, distilled essential oils are combined with an alcohol carrier. A successful DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check is required to make a perfume of common herbs, the kind found in shops throughout Bourgund. A set of alchemist's tools adds a +2 bonus to this check. A successful check produces 5 applications.

Specialty perfumes confer a tangible benefit when worn. The manufacture of these perfumes is usually a secret, known only to the most skilled perfumers. Each requires a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check to make using common ingredients. A creature can wear only one perfume at a time to gain its benefits.

Whether magical or mundane, perfume grants the wearer a 10-ft. aura, outside of which the perfume has no effect. This is reduced to 5 ft. when outside. A strong wind disperses a perfume, rendering it inactive. All perfumes have durations of 4 hours.

Wearing any kind of perfume grants creatures with the scent ability gain a +4 circumstance bonus to notice or track you.

Larger cities outside Bourgund have perfume shops, but they cater almost entirely to wealthy princes and nobles; only in Bourgund can commoners afford such luxury. Elsewhere, prices can be double or triple that listed here.

Specialty Perfumes

Noisome Defeat: This perfume is used when a person must travel through fouled areas or places with open sewers and the like. It grants a +2 circumstance bonus to saves against nauseating odors and the distraction ability of swarms.

Youth's Allure: This subtle perfume

has almost no scent. The wearer gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Disguise skill checks.

Water of Love: This is the most common type of specialty perfume sold in Bourgund. It enhances the wearer's physical attractiveness, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks.

Exotic Perfumes

Another type of perfume confers no special bonuses but is made from extremely rare ingredients such as nixie blood, dragon breath, and roc musk. The knowledge and ability to distill aromatic essences from unusual substances requires a Craft (alchemy) check. The price of such perfume is the cost of procuring the ingredients (usually a substantial reward paid to adventurers) plus 10% paid to the crafter.

Items

Perfume Ring: This large ring holds a small compartment disguised as a faceted jewel. The chamber holds one dose of any perfume, enough to freshen a waning application.

Pomander: A pomander is a perfume container, usually designed as a hollow star or flower that holds perfume-scented gums or other aromatics. Holes in the pomander allow the contents to air out over an extended period. Citizens of Bourgund believe scents from a pomander wards off disease because foul vapors are the means of transmission.

Spirit Gum: Hardened tree sap combined with various aromatics and usually stored in a pomander. Any perfume can be added to spirit gum, doubling its duration.

The Rise of Perfume

Perfumery would have remained a minor facet of Bourgund's society if not for the wars of Duke Karlott Martenne Lsolei (the Sun). Karlott turned the city of Bourgund into a powerful duchy by carving out a territory from the Goblin Wastes. In the climactic battle against the goblin king, Dizzerax, Duke Karlott's knights held the line against superior numbers because the feculent stench-bombs the goblins employed to sicken foes were rendered useless. Each knight held to his face a pomander filled with scented gum created by Bourgund's perfumers for just such a purpose. Their tactical advantage neutralized, the goblin army was routed and Dizzerax slain.

In honor of the duchy's perfumers, Karlott commissioned the Rose Knights, an elite guard who bear the flower-shaped pomander emblazoned on their shields. Wealthy citizens sponsored perfume makers as never before, and wearing scents became a way to demonstrate one's patriotism.

Wondrous Items and Magical Perfumes

Magic perfumes act as other perfumes. They last for 4 hours and make it easier for creatures with scent to notice or track you. Their effects operate in an aura of 10 ft. (or 5 ft. outdoors) centered on you. *Detect magic* reveals the aura.

AIR OF GISELE

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 3rd
Slot —; **Price** 3,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This perfume's scent changes the attitude of creatures. You make a Diplomacy check as a free action to alter a creature's attitude when it enters the aura. You gain a +4 bonus on the check but cannot affect hostile creatures or creatures with an Intelligence of less than 3. Success indicates the target's attitude becomes one step more favorable toward you. You can make Diplomacy checks as normal to further influence the target.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft (alchemy), Craft Wondrous Item, *calm emotions*; **Cost** 1,500 gp

Perfumes in Other Cities

Given Bourgund's position west of the Iron Crags beyond the Goblin Wastes, the art and craft of perfume making is almost unknown outside the duchy. However, wherever introduced, it is often eagerly taken up. Merchants from Triolo and Sikkim routinely brave the White Sea crossing and the Goblin Wastes to carry perfumes back to eager customers. In Zobeck, wearing and making perfume has yet to catch on. The practice strikes the city's inhabitants as aristocratic, reminding them too much of the dreaded Stross family, though they are happy to transport and sell the stuff to others.

CHEST OF CEDAR

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 6th
Slot —; **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** 10 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This large box of naturally fragrant wood is further imbued with scented oils. All clothing kept within it for at least 24 hours magically takes on the chest's aromas. Most cedar chests can hold four shirts at one time. Wearing the clothes grants you a +4 resistance bonus to saves against nausea-inducing odors for 8 hours. Any clothing so affected also radiates faint abjuration magic.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *resistance*; **Cost** 2,000 gp

COURTESAN'S ALLURE

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 3rd
Slot —; **Price** 2,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This perfume benefits bards and other individuals who rely on the attention of other creatures. Courtesan's allure adds a +2 bonus to the DC of any mind-affecting compulsion effect or spell originating from you, such as a bard's fascinate ability.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft (alchemy), Craft Wondrous Item, *eagle's splendor*; **Cost** 1,000 gp

DELILAH'S ATOMIZER

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 4th
Slot —; **Price** 1,800 gp; **Weight** 1/8 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This small crystal spray bottle turns any

perfume into a powerful intoxicant. A perfume sprayed from this device allows you to use *hypnotism* as a spell-like ability one time within the next hour against creatures within a perfume's aura, no matter the perfume. The atomizer holds up to four doses.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *hypnotism*; **Cost** 900 gp

POMME D'AMBRE (APPLE OF AMBER)

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 4th
Slot —; **Price** 1,500 gp; **Weight** 1/8 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This pomander resembles a silver apple. When worn on a chain around your neck and loaded with perfume, it grants a +2 resistance bonus to Fortitude saves against disease.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *resistance*; **Cost** 750 gp

SCENTED LURE

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 6th
Slot —; **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This perfume exudes a very strong odor that attracts other creatures. When applied to a person or object the perfume's scent expands in a radius of 10 ft./round to a maximum of 100 ft. The scent cannot move through walls or impermeable objects. All creatures (except the wearer) within this area move toward the source of the odor using the most direct means available (Will DC 15 negates). Creatures with the Scent ability receive a -2 penalty on this save.

Affected creatures can take no actions except to defend themselves. If the path leads them into a dangerous area or the creature is attacked, it receives another saving throw to end the effect with a +4 bonus. A victim within 5 ft. of the odor's source stands there and inhales deeply. A creature that successfully saves is immune to the same perfume's effect for its duration.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *enthrall*; **Cost** 2,000 gp

Perfumer's Feats

COVERING SCENT

The perfumes you create cover other more suspicious odors.

Prerequisite: Craft (alchemy) 7 ranks

Benefit: You can create contact poisons with a pleasant odor. The DC to detect the poison as a trap increases by +2.

THE NOSE KNOWS

You know a perfume by its scent.

Prerequisite: Craft (perfume) 7 ranks

Benefit: You can determine the type and ingredients of any perfume that you can smell (Craft (alchemy) DC 20). You can also use this check result to determine the perfume's maker as if you had made a Diplomacy skill check to gather information about an individual.

Perfume as Treasure

Perfumes are often confused with potions, at least until someone tries a taste test. Perfumes show up in bandit treasure hoards, especially around Bourgund, where even uncouth peasants know the value of a good perfume. The hill giants north of Bourgund have developed an appreciation of the substances, as it seems to be particularly effective on their women (see "Ecology of the Hill Giant" in *KOBOLD QUARTERLY* #10 for more details on giant courtship).

With their keen sense of smell, dragons relish various Bourgundian perfumes, delighting in the combination of ingredients, which they can detect individually. Dragon hoards often contain exotic perfumes worth considerable sums to connoisseurs – and dragons are a constant threat to perfumers seeking to carry their wares across the Goblin Wastes to the Seven Cities.

Adventure Hooks

In their ever-growing need for new and exotic perfumes, Bourgund's perfumers are incorporating rarer ingredients. Adventurers can make a pretty penny gathering items found only in the Goblin Wastes: griffon eggs, worg's blood, and giant centipede chitin.

A rival has stolen the recipe book of the duke's perfumer, Etienne Tournesol. The man offers a considerable reward for its return.

Sir Darien Roncifer was recently murdered with a contact poison scented to seem like perfume and applied to his riding gloves. This leaves two questions: Who did it? And who distilled the poison? Ω

Skill Battles

by Matthew J. Hanson

Art By Michael Jaecks

Heroes cannot solve every conflict with swords and spells. Sometimes, they need to rely on their wits, training, and natural talents.

Typically, skill challenges are the heart of encounters where skills play a vital role, but these sometimes fall flat because they lack opposition. Consider instead the possibility of pitting your player characters (PCs) against a group of NPCs in direct opposition. This is where skill battles shine.

Running a Skill Battle

You can run a skill battle as part of a combat encounter or as an encounter all its own. The defining feature of a skill battle is that both the PCs and their opponents make skill checks throughout the encounter. Unless otherwise stated, all skill checks in a skill battle require a minor action. Failing a skill check in a skill battle creates no penalty, but the longer the PCs go without success, the more likely it is that their foe will prevail.

The first time you run a skill battle, you might let your players know the general rules, especially if they have a lot of experience running traditional skill challenges. The slightly different mechanics of skill battles might affect their choices.

When planning a skill battle, you need to determine its level: it should be within 4 levels of the PCs. The skill battle level determines the difficulty of the various skill checks the PCs and their opponents must make (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, Chapter

3) and may have other effects as indicated in the skill battle description. Characters also receive XP for the skill battle based on the level. There is no strict formula to determine how many creatures the encounter is worth, but it should be worth between one and five creatures equal to its level, depending on how vital it is to the encounter.

Like any encounter, always remain flexible. Your players are likely to come up with new ways to use their skills that neither you nor a game designer could predict. As long as their suggestions seem reasonable, let them try their skill, and if they succeed, grant them benefits similar to another skill success.

Reading a Skill Battle

Setup The setup describes elements of the encounter, such as terrain and monsters.

Category Skill battles come in two categories: balance and race. In a balance skill battle, successes from one side effectively undo the other. In a race, you should track successes for each side independently, and whichever side achieves the target number (listed in the entry) prevails in the challenge.

Skill Area Describes where characters may make a skill check as part of the skill battle.

PC/Opponent Primary Skills Skills that PCs and their opponents can use to achieve successes in the skill battle.

PC/Opponent Secondary Skills Secondary skills can affect the skill battle, but they do not count toward victory or defeat. Some secondary skills

might also function as primary skills, and players should decide how to use them before they roll.

PC/Opponent Primary Success A primary success is what happens when PCs or their opponents succeed at a primary skill check. There may be a limit to how many primary successes a character or party can have per turn.

PC/Opponent Secondary Success A secondary success is what happens when characters succeed at secondary skill checks. Secondary skills frequently have several options.

Victory/Defeat If the PCs are the first to complete the requisite number of skill successes, they achieve a victory, but if their opponents are first, the PCs are defeated. Race skill battles always have victory and defeat conditions, but balance skill battles usually do not.

Building a Skill Battle

To build your own skill battle, first decide whether the battle should be a balance or a race. Ask yourself how much middle ground there is between the extremes and how interesting that middle ground is.

For instance, the open dimensional rift skill battle (see the sample) has increasing and decreasing levels of danger that makes balance a good choice. And at first glance, the redeem the fallen hero skill battle seems like a good choice for a balance challenge since each argument from the villain is countered by the PCs. However, the intermediate state is that the fallen hero stands there doing nothing. In the race model, the fallen hero chooses a side as

soon as he can be convinced, a far more dramatic approach than dithering in the middle for the entire encounter.

Consider is whether the skill battle is part of a combat or is its own encounter. If the skill battle stands alone, you need to include a wide range of skills, to involve all your players. You may also give the PCs a range of options regarding what the skills can accomplish; this ensures that so even if they only have one skill available, they can make meaningful choices.

You do not need to provide as many options for the opponents; indeed, limiting NPC choices tends to keep the game moving faster.

Sample Skill Battles

The following are examples of skill battles you could use in your game:

OPEN DIMENSIONAL RIFT (SKILL BATTLE)

This skill battle is the classic struggle of evil cultists to open a dimensional rift and unleash hell on earth.

Setup The terrain in this encounter requires five altars arranged in a circle.

The dimensional rift begins to open in the center of these altars. Depending on how large of an area you want for your battle, the altars could be spaced 3 – 9 squares away from the center of the rift. As the battle starts, at least some of the opponents should be adjacent to altars. If you want to challenge the PCs, you may have some of the altars already activated.

The skill battle assumes that several opponents are trained in either Arcana or Religion. If only one “boss” monster is trained in these skills, you could make the altars activate after only 1 opponent success.

A level 13 open dimensional rift skill battle might feature the following:

- 1 Drider Fanglord (*Monster Manual*)
- 2 Drow Arachnomancers (*Monster Manual*)
- 1 Drow Priest (*Monster Manual*)
- 2 Drow Warriors (*Monster Manual*)

Category Balance; XP as two monsters

Skill Area You must be adjacent to one of the altars to attempt a skill check for that altar.

PC Primary Skills Arcana, moderate

DC; Religion, moderate DC You use your knowledge of arcane and divine powers to help seal the dimensional rift.

Opponent Primary Skills Arcana, moderate DC; Religion, moderate DC

PC Success You turn a completely active altar into a partially active altar or a partially active altar into an inactive altar. You may only achieve 1 primary success/turn.

Opponent Success If your opponent succeeds at a skill check, the altars become partially active. If your opponent succeeds at another skill check on a partially active altar, the altar becomes completely active, and the dimensional rift expands. Each opponent may only achieve 1 primary success/turn.

The Dimensional Rift The strength of the dimensional rift depends on how many altars have been completely activated. Partially activated altars do not affect the size of the rift.

One Altar—The rift fills a burst 0. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the rift takes 5 hp acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage per tier.



Two Altars—The rift fills a burst 1. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the rift takes 5 hp acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage per tier.

Three Altars—The rift fills a burst 1. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the rift takes 5 hp acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage per tier.

Any creature within 10 squares of the rift is attacked on the start of its turn: level +1 vs. Fortitude, target is pulled 1 square toward the center of the rift.

Four Altars—The rift fills a burst 2. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the rift takes 10 acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage per tier.

Any creature within 10 squares of the rift is attacked on the start of its turn: level +3 vs. Fortitude, target is pulled 1 square towards the center of the rift.

Five Altars—The rift fills a burst 3. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the rift takes 10 hp acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage per tier.

Any creature within 10 squares of the rift is attacked on the start of its turn: level + 5 vs. Fortitude, target is pulled 2 square towards the center of the rift. Any creature that is pulled into the center of the rift is transported into the abyss.

Every turn, a demon whose level is equal to or less than the level of the skill battle emerges from the center of the rift. Roll 1d6 (1 – 5, the demon is a minion; 6, the demon is a standard monster).

REDEEM THE FALLEN HERO (SKILL BATTLE)

In this skill battle, PCs encounter a former hero who has fallen to the path of evil. Ideally, PCs have already formed a relationship with fallen hero. To complicate matters, a servant of darkness strives to complete the fallen hero's journey to the dark side by convincing him to attack the PCs.

Set Up A redeem the fallen hero skill battle may occur in nearly any location. The skill battle assumes a single powerful speaker is tempting the fallen hero. To present several tempters, increase the number of successes needed and lift the cap on primary successes.

Until one side achieves victory in the skill battle, the fallen hero takes a total defense action each turn.

A 7th-level redeem the fallen hero skill battle might be as follows:
3 Dragonborn Soldiers (*Monster Manual*)
1 Eladrin Fey Knight (the fallen hero) (*Monster Manual*)

1 Succubus (*Monster Manual*)
2 Tiefling Heretics (*Monster Manual*)
Category Race 3 (the first team to achieve 3 successes wins); XP as two monsters

Skill Area As long as the fallen hero can hear you, you may attempt a skill check.

PC Primary Skills Bluff, difficult DC; Diplomacy, difficult DC You must convince the fallen hero to rejoin the light.

PC Secondary Skills Bluff, moderate DC; Diplomacy, moderate DC; Insight, moderate DC; Intimidate, moderate DC. You aid your allies, determine the fallen hero's attitude, and interfere with the tempter.

Opponent Primary Skills Bluff, difficult DC; Diplomacy, difficult DC

PC Primary Success You achieve 1 success toward completing the skill battle. Your party may only achieve 1 primary success/round.

PC Secondary Success You may choose one of the following options:
Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight—You grant a +2 bonus to all PC primary skill checks until the end of your next turn.

Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate—You may impose a -2 penalty to all your enemy's primary skill checks until the end of your next turn.

Insight—You can tell how many successes the opponent has achieved so far.

Opponent Primary Success Your opponent achieves 1 success toward completing the skill battle. The opposing side may achieve only 1 primary success/round.

Victory You convince the fallen hero to again take up the cause of righteousness and join the battle on your side.

Defeat Your enemy convinces the fallen hero to continue down the path of darkness. The fallen hero joins the battle and fights against you.

THE GOLDEN HUNT (SKILL BATTLE)

In this skill battle, a potential patron sets up a test between the PCs and a rival group. The patron has bred nine golden hares and released them in a private grove. Whichever group can catch—without harming—the most gold hares wins the patron's favor, ensuring a series of lucrative quests.

Setup The action takes place on a forest battle mat, but the standard 5-ft. scale no longer applies. Instead, the characters can all move 1 square as a move action. Because of dense trees, characters see a maximum of 4 squares away. Characters can use utility powers in this encounter, but any attacks made against rivals or hares means automatic failure of the encounter. The PCs and their rivals all begin near each other while the hares are dispersed throughout the forest.

The hares automatically go first each round. On the hare's turn, they either hide (if nobody is nearby) or move away from the closest creature. A hare does not need to roll to hide and can move up 2 squares as a move action (4 squares/turn).

A 2nd-level golden hunt skill battle might include the following opponents:
5 Elf Scouts (*Monster Manual*)

Category Race 5; XP as five monsters

Skill Area You must be adjacent to or in the same square as a hare to attempt a primary skill or provide a bonus to a primary skill. You must be adjacent to an opponent to impose a penalty. You may use other skills from anywhere in the forest.

PC Primary Skills Acrobatics, difficult DC; Athletics, difficult DC; Nature, difficult DC

You can catch the golden hare using strength, speed, or knowledge of your quarry.

PC Secondary Skills Athletics, moderate DC; Bluff, moderate DC; Intimidate, moderate DC; Nature, moderate DC; Perception, moderate DC; Thievery, moderate DC

You have many options for in this skill battle, from aiding friends to distracting opponents, finding trails, and sneaking up on the targets.

Opponent Primary Skills

Acrobatics, difficult DC; Athletics, difficult DC; Nature, difficult DC

Opponent Secondary Skills Stealth, moderate DC

PC Primary Success You capture a hare safely.

PC Secondary Success You may choose one of the following options:

Acrobatics, Athletics, Nature, Perception—You grant a +2 bonus to all PC primary skill checks until the end of your next turn.

Bluff, Intimidate, Nature—You impose a -2 penalty to all adjacent enemies' primary skill checks until the end of your next turn.

Perception, Nature—You pick up tracks and know the direction to the closest hare.

Perception—You find a hiding hare or hiding opponent within your range of vision.

Bluff, Nature, Thievery—All of the opponents you can see believe that a hare is in your square.

Stealth—You are hidden from opponents and hares until the end of your next turn. While hiding, you must use both your move and standard actions to move 1 square.

Opponent Primary Success Your opponent catches a hare safely.

Opponent Secondary Skills Your opponents have the following option:

Stealth—Your opponent is hidden from your party and the hares until the end of his next turn. While hiding, your opponent must use both their move and standard actions to move 1 square.

Victory If you catch five hares (over half), you gain the favor of the patron. If you wish, you may try to catch more for bragging rights.

Defeat Your opponents catch five hares, and you do not gain the patron's favor.

AWAKEN THE ANCIENT MACHINE (SKILL BATTLE)

In ages past, ancient civilizations produced marvels of technology. One such machine has recently been uncovered, and unless the PCs intervene, it will be used for evil purposes.

Setup The machine has two main features: a raised platform and several control areas on the platform. The platform should be 4 – 6 squares in each direction, and it should be 10 ft. tall/tier. Each platform holds three or four control areas, which are 1 square in size.

A 4th-level awaken the ancient machine skill battle might include the following:

- 2 Dwarf Bolters (*Monster Manual*)
- 1 Halfling Prowler (*Monster Manual*)
- 3 Human Bandits (*Monster Manual*)

Category Balance; XP as one monster
Skill Area You must be adjacent to the controls to attempt a skill check.

PC Primary Skills History, moderate DC; Thievery, moderate DC

You use your knowledge of ages past to recall such a machine and use your knack with traps to divine its purpose.

PC Secondary Skills Athletics, moderate DC; Endurance, moderate DC

Many of the controls are difficult to manipulate, and a friend with nimble fingers or a strong arm can come in handy.

Opponent Primary Skills History, moderate DC; Thievery, moderate DC

PC Primary Success You start to gain control of the machine and move its status 1 step in the positive direction.

PC Secondary Success You grant a +2 bonus to all PC primary skill checks until the end of your next turn.

Opponent Primary Success Your opponent starts to gain control of the machine and moves the machine's status 1 step in the negative direction. Ω

Ancient Machine

You can deploy several of the ancient machine's defenses – if you control it. Your options depend on the machine's status, which starts at 0.

- 4 Your opponent gains complete control. As a standard action, any opponent who has made at least 1 successful Thievery or History check can make a *shudder* attack, *crossbow* attack, *spike* attack, or *lightning burst* attack.
- 3 Your opponent gains more control. As a standard action, any opponent who has made at least 1 successful Thievery or History check can make a *shudder* attack, *crossbow* attack, or *spike* attack.
- 2 Your opponent begins to take control. As a standard action, any opponent who has made at least 1 successful Thievery or History check can make a *shudder* attack or *crossbow* attack.
- 1 The machine shudders. It makes a *shudder* attack against all creatures on the platform.
- 0 The machine is inert.
- 1 The machine shudders. It makes a *shudder* attack against all creatures on the platform.
- 2 You begin to take control. As a standard action, PCs who have made at least 1 successful Thievery or History check can make a *shudder* attack or *crossbow* attack.
- 3 You gain more control. As a standard action, PCs who have made at least 1 successful Thievery or History check can make a *shudder* attack, *crossbow* attack, or *spike* attack.
- 4 You gain total control. As a standard action, PCs who have made at least 1 successful Thievery or History check can make a *shudder* attack, *crossbow* attack, *spike* attack, or *lightning burst* attack.

[m] **Spike** (standard; at-will)

Level +5 vs. AC; 2d12 + 1/2 level damage

[r] **Crossbow** (standard; at-will)

Targets creature not on platform; level +5 vs. AC; 2d8 + 1/2 level damage

[c] **Lightning Burst** (standard; recharge on 5, 6)[star] **Lightning**

Close burst platform +10; targets all enemies; level +3 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 1/2 level lightning damage

Miss—Half damage

[c] **Shudder** (standard; at-will)

Targets each creature on platform; level +3 vs. Reflex; target is pushed 1 square away from the center of the platform and knocked prone



Hoard Magic

Tapping the Power of Treasure

By Michael Furlanetto

Art by Ben Hodson

Sagacious dragons lounge on beds of coin. Goodly dwarven kings risk their subjects' lives and limbs to wrest silver and platinum from the bowels of the world. Even saintly rulers proudly wear the golden emblems of their rule.

Wittingly or not, all tap into a little-known arcane force known as hoard

magic. Precious metals embody the distilled perfection of the natural elements. Each shining nugget focuses the essence of its surroundings and provides a keyhole, a way to shape those surroundings. Hoard magic practitioners exploit this resonance, extending their will through large quantities of precious metals to mold nearby reality.

Hoard magic provides a new way to make lairs more memorable and encounters more dynamic. It also explains the strange allure of piles of coins and expensive regalia to both

the greediest of dragons and the most selfless of kings.

Hoard Magic in Play

Mechanically, hoard magic generates two kinds of effects. On a large scale, the environment surrounding a hoard gradually warps to suit the nature of the hoard's owner. This alteration of reality also creates new combat powers, which the hoard's owner can use.

Both effects occur only gradually. For monsters, this should not matter—assume that the creature has had enough time to establish the effects it desires, but do not allow it to change those effects unless weeks or months pass. For PCs, this creates some complexity, discussed below.

Hoard magic is obscure and rare. For PCs to learn about it or to recognize that it lies behind effects they observe, they must succeed at DC 24 Arcana check.

To use hoard magic in your game, follow these three steps:

Table 1: Hoard Creation

Level	Effective Hoard Wealth	Powers Available
Middle heroic	2,000 gp	1
High heroic	10,000 gp	2
Middle paragon	50,000 gp	3
High paragon	250,000 gp	4
Middle epic	1,250,000 gp	5
High epic	6,250,000 gp	6

Table 2: Environmental Effects

Tier	Sample Appropriate Powers
Heroic	+1 to attacks with a given keyword;
	+1 to damage of a given type;
	or bestowing “easy” conditions (like slowed or weakened) on successful attacks
Paragon	+2 to attacks with a given keyword;
	+2 to damage of a given type;
	+1 to attacks and +1 to damage with a given keyword; or bestowing “moderate” conditions (like blinded or dazed) on successful attacks
Epic	+3 to attacks with a given keyword;
	+3 to damage of a given type;
	+2 to attacks and +1 to damage with a given keyword (or the reverse); or bestowing “hard” conditions (like dominated or stunned) on successful attacks

1. ESTABLISH THE VALUE OF THE HOARD.

Use either the level of the foe or the amount of precious metal in its hoard to determine the number of hoard magic powers available. Alternately, choose hoard magic powers you want and assign treasure to match. See *Table 1: Hoard Creation for guidance*.

Several options exist for calculating effective hoard wealth. The simplest involves summing the value of all treasure in the form of coins (including astral diamonds for simplicity). Art objects made of precious metals, gemstones, or both can be included in the sum for greater variety.

Somewhat more complicated, for purposes of calculating effective wealth, is calculating the size of a hoard more by number of coins than by their worth; that is, weighting it to reward sheet volume. In this case, treat a copper piece as if it were worth 1/10 of a gold piece and a silver piece as if it were worth half a gold piece. This option emphasizes the importance of precious metals and explains why dragons sit on vast piles of copper and silver pieces. It also allows you to assign more hoard magic powers to a monster without giving it an unbalanced amount of wealth. However, if your players will balk at the complexities of recovering tons of copper pieces from a distant dragon's lair, this variant may not suit your group.

Split the available powers evenly between environmental effects and combat powers, assigning odd powers wherever you wish.

2. DETERMINE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS.

The environmental effects created by hoard magic resemble planar traits possessed by various locations around the multiverse. Because they reflect personality, choose these effects to reflect the owner of the hoard's predilections, attacks, and the like. Keywords provide a quick way to capture this feel.

For instance, the area around a red dragon's lair should be fiery while the countryside surrounding a rich temple to Khors the Sun God might empower radiant damage, weaken necrotic damage, and prevent true darkness from falling. Use the following table as a guide to the appropriate power level.

The range of these environmental effects depends on their tier. Heroic foes can alter only their lair itself, paragon creatures can change an area of 1 mile or so around their hoards, and epic monsters can dominate an entire region. If you expand or contract these regions for story reasons—perhaps an epic creature lives on a very small demiplane, so its powers would only affect a lair-sized area—strengthen or weaken the powers appropriately to compensate for their altered areas.

Allow PCs to notice the environmental effect before combat with a Perception check (hard DC). These effects may be dispelled like other magical zones, although they return after 1 turn while the hoard remains intact.

3. CREATE COMBAT POWERS.

Combat powers should emphasize the creature's theme and work well with its pre-existing powers—use cold-based powers for silver-loving white dragons, for

instance, and necrotic powers for jewel-bedecked lichs. Create them just as you would for a new or modified monster. To achieve the proper power level, use at-will or easily recharged powers appropriate for a creature 1 level lower than the hoard's owner or encounter powers of the same level as the hoard's owner.

Alternately, you can increase the power of an existing at-will power or allow an encounter power to recharge once (when bloodied, for instance). This method is easier to apply on the fly, but it doesn't make hoard magic feel as unique and flavorful. Try to avoid it during the players' first encounter with hoard magic.

Do not forget that large piles of coins may have mundane terrain effects as well – see the *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons* for some suggestions.

Example: Iotreshimal the Greedy

To illustrate hoard magic, consider Iotreshimal the Greedy, an elder blue dragon who fully appreciates the power of hoard magic. Half of Iotreshimal's wealth lies beneath him in the form of coins. He has an effective hoard wealth of 250,000 gp, which is appropriate for a foe at the top of the paragon tier. In terms of treasure parcels, this means that Iotreshimal has parcels 5 – 10 of the standard level 20 list, all in the form of coins.

For a dragon, this is not unreasonable, although such a concentration of the players' rewards will require some care on the part of the GM when he places other treasure parcels. Alternately, if you choose to use the most complicated option for calculating effective hoard wealth given above, Iotreshimal could have fewer parcels but with the gold

converted to silver or copper pieces.

This hoard wealth gives Iotreshimal access to four hoard magic powers. We'll put two of those into environmental effects and two into combat powers. Because blue dragons emphasize lightning, thunder, and fear, the powers we choose will reflect those keywords.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The constant storms surrounding Iotreshimal's coin-filled lair have changed the structure of the air itself:

Heart of the Storm—Attacks with the lightning or thunder keywords within 1 mile of Iotreshimal's hoard gain a +1 bonus to hit and damage. These bonuses stack for attacks with both keywords.

This counts as two hoard magic powers because it involves powers with two different keywords—thunder and lightning—giving bonuses to each for both attacks and damage.

COMBAT POWERS

With two powers remaining to be assigned, let's give Iotreshimal one 20th-level encounter power and one 19th-level at-will power.

SPARKS FROM THE ROCKS

Over time, hoard magic has laced the dragon's lair with conductive ore, allowing him to attack foes at a distance with his innate electrical power.

At-Will ♦ Lightning

Standard

Ranged 20

Attack +22 vs. Reflex

Hit 2d12 + 4 lightning damage, and target is dazed (save ends)

Note—Within Iotreshimal's lair, *Heart of the Storm* strengthens this power (increasing it to +23 vs. Reflex and 2d12 + 5 lightning damage)

THUNDERING REBUKE

The rocks of his lair magnify acoustic energy. Iotreshimal's screams and taunts focus on his foes, injuring them with raw reverberating power.

Encounter ♦ Thunder

Standard

Area burst 2

Close burst 20

Attack +25 vs. Fortitude

Hit 2d8 + 9 thunder damage, and target takes ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends)

Miss—The target takes ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends)

Note—Within Iotreshimal's lair, *Heart of the Storm* strengthens this power (increasing it to +26 vs. Fortitude and 2d8 + 10 thunder damage with ongoing 11 thunder damage)

Player Hoards

Most treasure ends up in the hands of the players. Canny PCs may wish to use the magic contained in hoards they have looted for their own benefit. Let them! By choosing to forgo magic items or equipment for the magical benefits of a pile of coins, players are trading one boon for another, slightly more limited one. Hoard magic powers will typically only apply to the PCs when they are in their strongholds, so by using this form of magic, the PCs are putting themselves at a slight disadvantage. A slight boost will keep the PCs at the appropriate power level.

When choosing hoard magic benefits for your PCs, use either the rules given above or existing wondrous lair items (see *Adventurer's Vault 2*) as inspiration. A week of concentration allows PCs to unlock a 1/3 of the hoard magic powers available to them; a month must pass to unlock the next 1/3 powers, and a year before the final powers are available. (Round the numbers of powers in the players' favor so that mid-heroic characters do not have to spend a year establishing a single power!)

Alternately, you might allow PCs to learn a ritual to shape the magic of the hoard more quickly. Resist the urge to have this ritual require a large component cost, as that defeats the purpose of hoard magic.

If the PCs do set up defenses for their stronghold using hoard magic, take that as a sign that they want to bring their base of operations into play. Occasionally, threaten that base with assaults or thieves, although too frequent challenges will tend to discourage their use of hoard magic.

The Magic of Hoards

Use hoard magic sparingly in your campaign—only some foes should have both the precious metals necessary for its use and the force of personality to impose their will on reality. Moreover, using hoard magic for every orc and kobold will rob it of some of its mystery and thus lessen its impact.

Hoard magic works best for capstone encounters in powerful creatures' lairs, where the environmental effects will make the finales more flavorful and dynamic and the combat powers will make the foes more unique. Dragons, liches, giant jarls, and powerful rulers all make good candidates for its use, as each could be expected to have vast wealth and the force of will to use it. Finally, once your players become aware of hoard magic, let them use it to reconnoiter their environments. If their acid-based attacks become stronger in the middle of the swamp, a black dragon may be near...

Add hoard magic to your game, and no longer will the dragon's coins be just another parcel of treasure! Ω

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Men of Honor

Alternate Paladin Codes

By Dan Voyce

Art by Maurice Leloir, Howard Pyle, Leipzig Illustrierte Zeitung

*Mine honor is my life, both grow in one.
Take honor from me, and my life is done.*
—William Shakespeare

All the core classes are bound to archetypes from history and myth, and perhaps, none more so than the paladin. The image of a shining knight upon a loyal steed with lance couched permeates the class and its abilities. The class's code of conduct is perfect for creating virtuous knights who would be at home around King Arthur's round table, but goodness doesn't stem from just one culture or social class. Many heroes never wore a suit of plate mail or knightly spurs but could be classed as paladins: Hector and Cincinnatus; Wong Fei-hung and Lin Chung; Saladin, Samson, and Judah Maccabee can all stand proudly beside Galahad and Joan of Arc as paragons of warrior virtue.

Paladins are defined as much by their code of conduct as by their powers. Their code is not just another part of their alignment, it's a lens that focuses their beliefs toward a particular aim and a public statement that says what they will and will not do. Goodness may dwell unseen within a paladin's heart, but the code is there for all to see.

But what exactly is this code? What rules do paladins follow, and how should they comport themselves? Surely, this matter has consumed more game time and been the source of more arguments than any other class feature in the game. Every edition has given us a tantalizing glimpse into the standard rules of paladinhood but rarely much

detail. The standard interpretation is also just one potential code. There's ample room for players and GMs to develop different beliefs and strictures for these most virtuous of heroes.

These four alternate codes of honor for the paladin class, each drawn from a different culture, are not just philosophies held in the heart. They are vows to everyone that enters the paladin's life—no matter how briefly or in what capacity—that the paladin will behave in a certain way. It is the soul of the order to which the paladin belongs, be that a religion, a secular organization, or a social class. Each provides tenets to adhere to and follows the same general mechanics as the standard code.

Each code has plenty of adherents who are not of the paladin class, so fighter aethelings, roguish pirates, and xiá monks can all find use for the information below. If your game allows variant paladins with different alignments, they too can find a code to follow here. Each has aspects open to different interpretations and traditional paladins might find themselves uneasily sharing a code with everyone from freedom-loving rebels to villainous blackguards.

The Code of the Aetheling

They said that of all the kings upon the earth, he was the man most gracious and fair-minded, kindest to his people and keenest to win fame.

—The Geats, paying tribute to Beowulf

Aethelings are the lords of Norse society—the captains of its longships,

the kings of its nations, the heroes of its sagas. Their code of conduct is simple: honor the gods, be wise in counsel, generous to your followers, and bow to no man who cannot make you.

Aetheling honor is called *drengskapr*, and those who hold to it are known as *drengr*. Those who do not are *níðingr*, shameful outlaws who will be condemned to Hel's ignoble hall in death.

A *drengr's* first duty is to uphold the security, prosperity, and honor of their followers. They are expected to be generous gift-givers, providing friends and retainers with food and drink, arms and armor, treasure, and a place to call home. They must maintain their own and their followers' good name and never let an insult go unanswered. True aethelings are expected to know the law, be good public speakers, and remain cheerful in the worst of circumstances. This last trait is especially prized; physical bravery is taken for granted, but stoicism in the face of death and adversity is even more important. No one escapes fate, and to complain or run from it is deeply shameful.

When not warring upon each other, slaying trolls, or raiding foreign coasts, an aetheling is expected to keep the peace and enforce law locally. At regional assemblies called *Tings*, they help to negotiate alliances, arrange marriages, witness contracts, arbitrate disputes, and see that everyone gets to have their fair say. As arbiters of the law, aethelings are often asked to perform these duties outside the *Ting* as well.

PRECEPTS

- Your name is all that remains after your death. Always be mindful of your reputation. Protect it and that of your relatives and followers. Let no injury or insult to them go unanswered.
- Break no oath.
- Do not associate with outlaws.
- Honor the gods with sacrifice after both success and failure.
- Uphold the laws of the Ting. Let each say his piece, and arbitrate quarrels with fairness.
- Do not pursue a feud or duel until a just offer of wergild (blood money) has been made and refused.
- Do not deny an honorable enemy an honorable end.
- Show hospitality to any man who is not an outlaw. Do not allow your guests to be mistreated or abused.
- Be cheerful in the face of adversity. Do not complain about hardships, and welcome danger as a chance to prove your worth.
- A dreng's wealth is measured by gifts, not horde. Do not keep more gold than you need.

The Code of the Brethren

Even pirates, before they attack another ship, hoist a black flag.

—Béla Király

How can a paladin be a pirate? The answer is that avarice is only one motivation for such naval adventures, and there is often a fine line between piracy, privateering, and outright war. Some captains do their duty out of patriotism or strong convictions rather than greed, and many who considered themselves honest have been named "pirate" by their enemies.

There are many types of pirate and many different codes with each code setting things out roughly the same: they specify who is eligible for attack and include provisions for discipline, specifications of each crewmate's share of treasure, and compensation for the injured. It is not merely an ideal

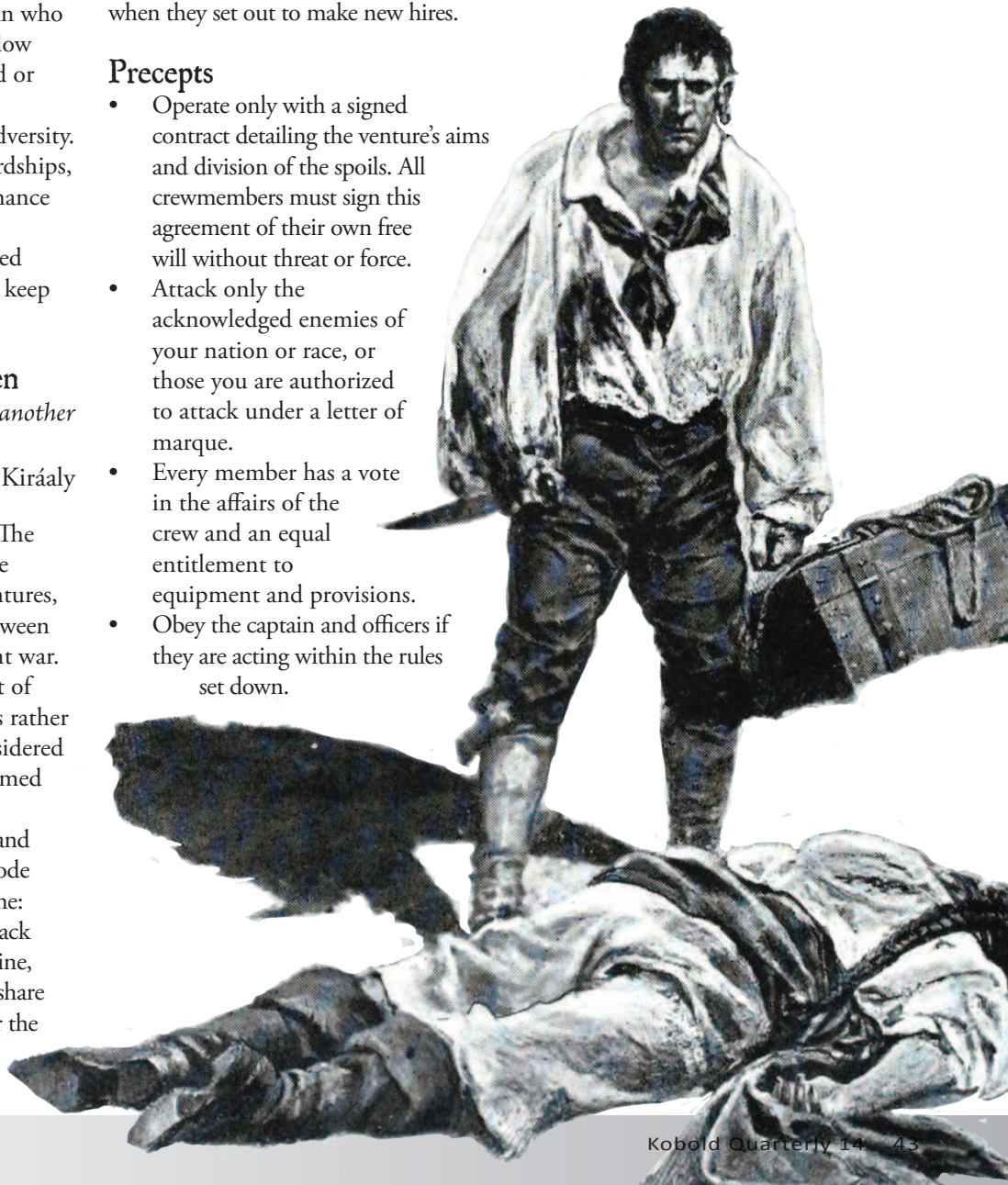
but a physical contract drawn up before the voyage, so every crewmember knows its aims and their own place within those aims. Commonly known as the *Articles of Agreement*, all must make their mark and swear an oath of allegiance on the articles before joining the crew. Sometimes this oath is sworn on a holy relic, at other times over a pair of crossed pistols or a national flag. Most crews regard their articles with great pride.

With its emphasis on democracy, cooperation, and fair division of booty, *Articles of Agreement* are also popular among land-bound adventurers, who draw them up as a joint contract of employment and sign of respectability. It has become almost a general adventurer's code in certain places with potential patrons often drawing up sets of articles when they set out to make new hires.

Precepts

- Operate only with a signed contract detailing the venture's aims and division of the spoils. All crewmembers must sign this agreement of their own free will without threat or force.
- Attack only the acknowledged enemies of your nation or race, or those you are authorized to attack under a letter of marque.
- Every member has a vote in the affairs of the crew and an equal entitlement to equipment and provisions.
- Obey the captain and officers if they are acting within the rules set down.

- Disputes between crewmates may only be resolved by violence with the agreement of all involved. Duels are to be conducted at an appointed time and place ashore, never aboard ship.
- Never desert your ship or crewmates in battle. Crewmembers are your brothers and sisters until their names are struck from the articles. Treat them accordingly.
- Wounded companions are to be given appropriate compensation for any permanent injuries.
- Accept surrender when it is offered. Captives must be treated well and freed when ransomed.



The Code of Xiá

A superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.

—Confucius

Xiá is an ancient Chinese word with many meanings, but all of them describe a righteous person who uses martial expertise to fight injustice and protect the innocent.

Experts in both armed and unarmed combat, xiá are typically men and women of great natural talent but low social class. There is also a long tradition of formerly influential judges, generals, and politicians being forced to leave their wealth and status behind when their good hearts bring them into conflict with a powerful but wicked lord. For them,

the open road is the only place they can find freedom and true justice. Whatever their origin, in many ways a xiá are quintessential adventurers—heroes wandering the world without ties to any earthly authority, fighting evil, and helping those in need.

Xiá has no specific religious principles, but many of its adherents also seek spiritual enlightenment and are later renowned as wise philosophers. They often found rebel groups, martial schools, or doctrines that later generations hold up as the epitome of virtue.

PRECEPTS

Unlike most paladin codes, the code of xiá is a personal thing and each practitioner is beholden only their own sense of right and wrong—but they hold themselves to it as stringently as any written code. They may well break the law to help those in need but never their own beliefs. Common xiá beliefs include:

- Material possessions are a burden. Do not keep more than you need.
- Help the needy. Spiritual or moral assistance is as important as physical aid.
- Uphold the truth. Defeat lies. Always keep your word and see that promises are fulfilled.
- Seek perfection in your martial art, but do not boast about your abilities and virtues. Do not use dishonorable tactics such as poison or firearms.
- Show respect to all you meet—especially those unworthy of it.
- Comrades should be treated as brothers and sisters. Their family is your family.
- You own the consequences of your actions. A deed is not “done” until its consequences are fully played out.
- Do not kill unless absolutely necessary.

The Code Duello

One for all, all for one!

—Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*

The Code Duello is designed to

ensure proper conduct in duels and to prevent matters of honor from becoming damaging vendettas. It ensures that non-violent alternatives have been exhausted and that injuries are limited by strict rules and prompt medical care. The code has existed in one form or another since ancient times, but the first formalized national code was set down in France in the 18th century.

The Code Duello is typically embraced by nobility and the armed forces. Soldiers are expected to be proud and hot-blooded with duels common between different branches of the military, competing regiments, and individual rivals.

Those who follow the code ensure that the proceedings of all duels are fair and witnessed and always give their opponent an opportunity to apologize for whatever offense has been caused. If acting as seconds, they must be alert for cheating by *either* side—honorable seconds have sometimes been known to shoot their own friend if they found him cheating, to preserve the honor of his name or regiment. Duels are typically fought with sword or pistol, although some countries have specific traditions regarding what weapons and armor are allowed.

Dueling is legal in some places, but more often, it's against the law but tacitly accepted. In this case, a duelist's honor is paramount, and the law must be elegantly circumvented or avoided. Sometimes, however, dueling is expressly forbidden by the code itself, such as between soldiers of the same side during wartime. In both cases, duelists can sometimes find ways to engage in battle, often engaging in elaborate “dares” in place of a straight fight: they might ride toward an opposing army to see who can go closest or stand brazenly on a city's walls while it's under heavy cannon fire. In such cases, the first to retreat is considered the loser.

Duels are not typically fought to “first blood” because true duelists consider this cowardly. To prove his or her worth in a fight, an honorable combatant should fight until they are no longer able to continue or until an attending physician or second calls a halt.



PRECEPTS

- Duel only to defend the honor of your nation, your monarch, your family, your comrades, your good name, and those who cannot defend themselves.
- One may not duel an individual greatly above or below one's social station (gentlemen may not fight servants, for example).
- Duels between allied soldiers are forbidden during time of war.
- Allow no insult to pass unchallenged. Challenges must be issued in public, directly to the person who caused the offence. Those who refuse both apology and duel must be scorned as cowards and not associated with.
- A duel is not honorable unless it is agreed to by all parties. An honorable offer of restitution must be accepted.
- The challenged party may chose the weapons used. The challenger has first choice of location. Both shall provide between one and three trusted representatives (or seconds) to act as go-betweens and ensure the duel is fair.
- If acting as a second, it is your duty to behave with fairness and to prevent cheating by either party.
- The manner in which a duel is conducted is as important as its outcome. Do not engage in cheating or use dishonorable tactics.
- When the duel is done, the matter is settled and both winner and loser should be respected for their courage.

In Your Game

Whatever your character's class, detailing a code of honor is a great way to delve into their personality and aims, define their place in the world, and create

great roleplaying opportunities. History has plenty to inspire you. Will your code be based on the Knights Templar, the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne, or the code of bushido? Does it focus on loyalty to an individual or to an abstract concept? Is it based around a particular religion or philosophy, or was it set down by a hero long ago? Why was the code created? What's the purpose of the group it binds together and who are their natural allies and enemies?

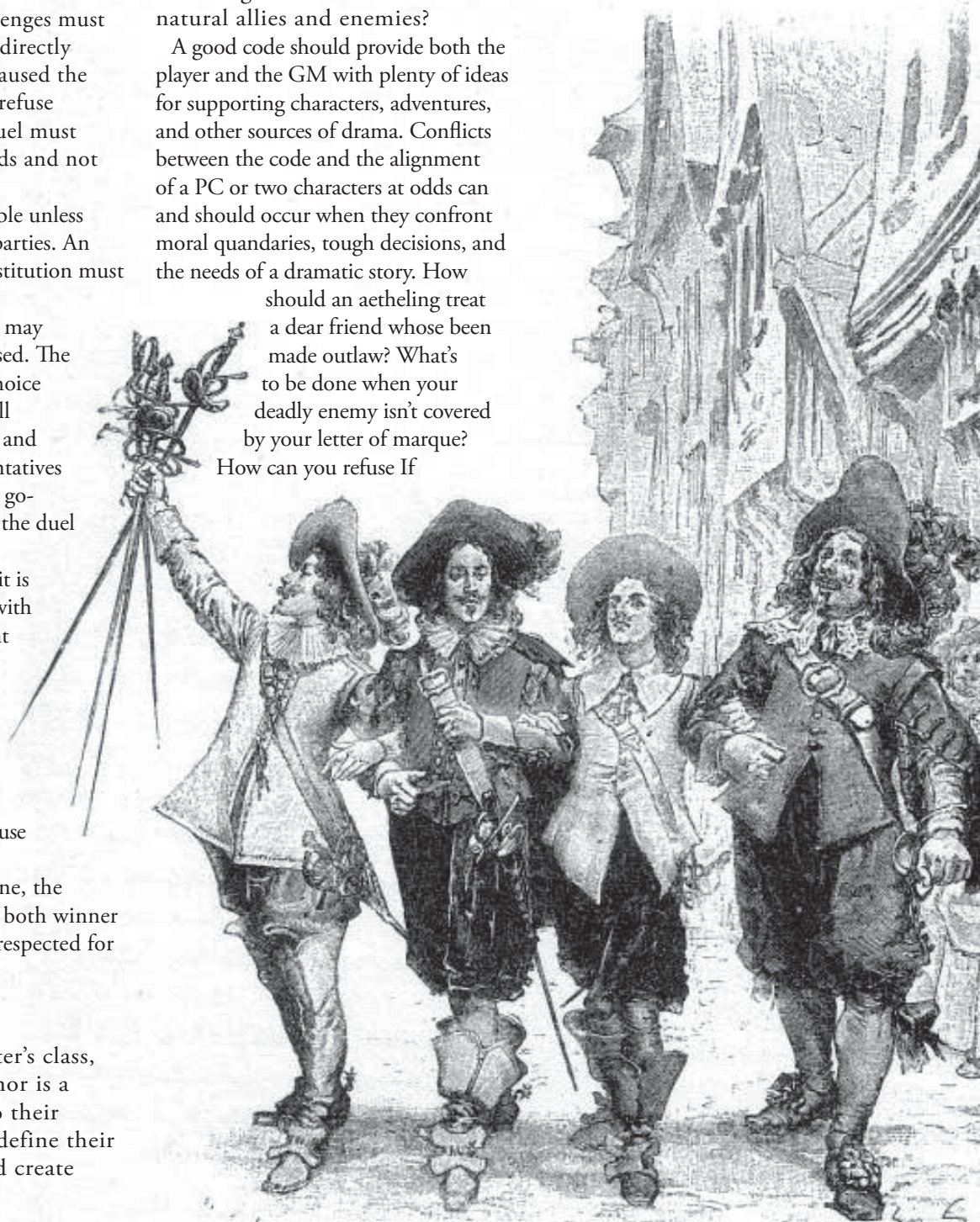
A good code should provide both the player and the GM with plenty of ideas for supporting characters, adventures, and other sources of drama. Conflicts between the code and the alignment of a PC or two characters at odds can and should occur when they confront moral quandaries, tough decisions, and the needs of a dramatic story. How

should an aetheling treat a dear friend who has been made outlaw? What's to be done when your deadly enemy isn't covered by your letter of marque?

How can you refuse If

your lover's brother challenges you to a duel, but how can you face your love again after wounding her closest kin? Such clashes are great moments of roleplaying and a chance for your hero to grow. There are no right or wrong answers here—ultimately it is up to the GM and player to decide the outcome.

Let's hope your character's faith is sufficient to the task. The choice might not be easy, but what paladin ever took the easy path? Ω



Dice versus Story

By Monte Cook

Art by McKenna

I'm going to tell you something that you already know but may have forgotten: roleplaying games are weird.

The way RPGs work becomes second nature to those who play them. We immerse ourselves in rulebooks, adventures, characters, stories, and dice. But when we step back and look at them from the outside, RPGs are weird.

One of the strangest things about them is that they are both games and stories. "Of course," you might say. "That's the point." Holding the game at arm's length, however, we should remain aware of what a strange synthesis this is. No one talks about the "story" of *Monopoly* or chess, although each does have a basic kind of story.

These are games, pure and simple.

If I said to you while we engaged in a game of chess, "your knight really shouldn't take my queen, it would be a better story if the two queens battled it out in the end," you'd think me daft. Because what I did was suddenly ask you to stop playing a game and to help me tell a story. Similarly, you'll likely not find a well-respected novelist who rolls dice to determine what happens next in a book. RPGs ask us to combine two things that aren't normally combined—which is their beauty.

But if we forget this, we can fall into the trap of losing this important synthesis. Specifically, I think many GMs fall victim to losing the *game* in *roleplaying game*. They reject the idea that the dice should determine anything—deciding, instead, that the story's the thing, period.

Now, I'm not going to tell you that approach is wrong. However, if you'll indulge me, I will describe why you

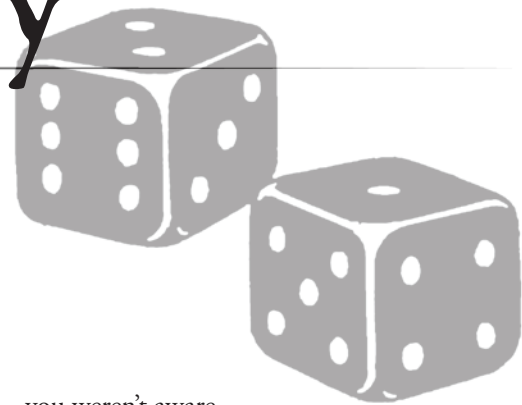
might want to consider injecting at least a taste of real game elements into your role playing game.

First off, let's clarify terms. By "game" elements, I mainly mean randomization. This means allowing the dice to truly determine the outcome of a conflict: sometimes allowing the game to determine what an NPC does or what challenges PCs face.

When the PCs enter into a combat or other challenge and the GM lets the dice fall where they may, there's likely a real chance for failure or defeat. Failure might not mean death. It might mean retreat, capture, or simply that they will have to try some other plan. Characters fail in stories all the time. It makes the final victory all the more meaningful.

It also means that sometimes things will happen that surprise the GM. But that shouldn't ever happen, right? The GM is the storyteller, the one with the vision of the overall flow of the campaign. True, but consider that, in a board game, you know how it's going to end because the rules tell you what the victory conditions are. In chess, at some point down the road, a player will be in checkmate, but you don't know how things are going to progress to that point until you start playing. If we adapt that kind of mindset to RPGs, the GM can have the general story idea planned, right up to the epic conclusion, but the specific path the story takes is an open issue.

In a way, it's like taking your friends out to a restaurant. You as the GM might decide what restaurant and when everyone will arrive, but the other diners (the "players") order what they want and eat what they want. The restaurant might be out of some items and might have some new specials



you weren't aware of. You might run into an unexpected acquaintance in the restaurant. And so on.

If the PCs are traveling overland to defeat the troll warlord and a die roll on a random encounter chart says a blue dragon appears, that doesn't necessarily derail the entire story. It does, however, change the way the things in that particular session might go. Random encounters or events in the game mean that things can happen that even the GM wasn't expecting (although, to be sure, since he wrote or at least decided to reference the chart, he's still the guiding hand behind everything).

This has led to some fantastic game experiences for me, personally, as both a GM and a player. The sudden, surprising presence of a powerful, dangerous encounter or event when neither the players nor the GM expected it generates a sudden surge of excitement. Occasionally, when the players believe that even the GM didn't know something was going to happen, there's a heightened sense of real danger that can be both thrilling and rewarding. The PCs' success no longer feels like a *fait accompli*, which can shake even a jaded player into exhilaration.

It becomes the GM's duty, then, to incorporate the encounter (and its ramifications) into the ongoing campaign. And that's also a fun aspect to the game that people sometimes forget. While the essence of an RPG might be for the players to be given surprising situations to which they

must react, sometimes the GM must be given the opportunity to react to the unknown as well. While this x-factor for him usually comes from the surprising choices the players make, sometimes it comes from the game itself—surprising die roll outcomes or random encounters. In this way, the GM's also *playing* the game and not just telling a story.

It's worth noting, too, that random elements can bring a certain kind of freshness to a campaign. GMs who have been running games for the same group for many years can get into ruts without even realizing it. Sometimes a GM uses the same old story ideas. I tend to overuse temples and religious plot-hooks, for example. A random element won't rewrite the entire story, but it might interject something I wouldn't have added on my own.

Of course, it's not just random encounters. As previously stated, unless the GM's fudging a lot of rolls or the stats involved, there's no knowing ahead of time if the PCs will be victorious against a foe until the actual rolls are made—or even if an important NPC likes or dislikes the PCs until they make Diplomacy checks. Some GMs might object to this uncertainty, but I really can't stress enough how the unpredictable turns that a game can take can be really fun. When the PCs are defeated by an encounter the GM thought they could handle, this is an opportunity.

As I mentioned before, perhaps the PCs are captured and imprisoned, providing a completely new adventure. Perhaps the opponent that bested them went on to commit some heinous act, and now, the PCs are blamed. Or they somehow have to undo what he did somehow. These wholly new scenarios not only wouldn't have happened if the dice didn't roll as they did, they couldn't happen without that impetus. These are scenarios that couldn't be simply scripted (without some serious, ham-fisted railroading). They arise out of everyone—GM included—playing the game.

I know full well that I'm getting into "hot button topic territory" here. For some, the story that the GM wants to tell trumps any die roll. The GM can fashion a great story but can't know everything ahead of time. Most prominently, he can't know what choices the PCs make until they make them. If he can, he's not a GM, he's a novelist. So why not occasionally go the next step and let the dice lead rather than the script? Even if for just a single side encounter now and again?

Some people, though, push this concept much further and eschew the GM-as-storyteller idea completely. In such a campaign, the GM provides a setting populated with challenges and adventures, and the players explore it as they want. This kind of game isn't story-less. On the contrary, great tales can be told about the exploits of the PCs as they search for treasure in the Tomb of the Forgotten King and

accidentally unleash the grand lich dwelling inside. Feeling responsible, the PCs then devote themselves to tracking down and destroying the evil undead creature. The GM created the tomb and the lich but never knew that the PCs would even go there, let alone unleash the lich and then hunt him down. In other words, the story arises from the play of the game.

This approach isn't for everyone, of course, and that's fine. It's intrinsically no better or worse than any other style of game. Sometimes players need more of a plotline to follow. Some players and some GMs want more of a straightforward, pre-ordained story, which is also fine. Perhaps the thing to take away from this is that in the synthesis of storytelling and game play that an RPG represents, it's worth the time to explore every facet of that synthesis from time to time to interject freshness and newness to this activity that we all know so well. Ω



Chumming the Dungeon

Dealing with Rob Heinsoo

By Jeremy L. C. Jones

Rob Heinsoo was a junior member on the design team for the 3E *Forgotten Realms* before moving to help design projects such as *Chainmail*, *D&D Miniatures*, and *Dreamblade* while at Wizards of the Coast. He returned to D&D as the lead designer for 4th Edition and has contributed heavily to the development of the *Forgotten Realms* (FR) through both recent editions. While he points to Bruce Cordell, Richard Baker, Ed Greenwood, and others as having greater influence on the *Forgotten Realms*, folks familiar with Heinsoo's work see his delightfully devious influence on elements such as the ever-shifting genasi and the dark pacts favored by the drow.

Whether designing or playing, Heinsoo is quick of wit, quick on his feet, and quick to recognize other people's good ideas. He is even quicker to strike a dangerous deal with his players.

As a game master, Heinsoo is known for *chumming the dungeon*, a term coined recently by Mike Fehlauer. "Chumming the dungeon," Heinsoo explains, "is when the players make worried or excited guesses about what's going on, allowing the dreadsharks of the GM's mind to churn the blood auguries and home in on fresh meat for the plotline with a smile of secret gratitude."

His love for cutting deals and for "turning nothing into something" led Heinsoo to design the card games *Three-Dragon Ante* and *Emperor's*

Gambit. In our interview, Heinsoo and I talk about his days perpetrating hoaxes in *Alarums & Excursions* (A&E), work at Wizards of the Coast, and current and forthcoming projects.

Jones: As lead designer, what were your primary contributions to 4E?

Heinsoo: 4E had several different teams in its design and development process, including a core design team, three separate design teams for subsequent drafts, and a couple of different development teams. I was the person who was present during every phase, familiar with everything that had been discussed, avoided, or decided on during earlier stages. I started by leading design discussions with James Wyatt and Andy Collins, using a workshop-style approach that I believe we spoke about in some detail in an interview in an earlier issue of *Kobold Quarterly* (Editor – yes indeed, see "They Wrote the Book" in issue #5).

But there were a couple wrinkles to my role as lead designer that probably weren't covered in the earlier interview. One of my strengths was to be quick to recognize other people's good ideas. If a lead designer digs in his heels to defend ill-conceived mechanics

against better alternatives proposed by other designers, everyone suffers. I'm self-critical without being pessimistic, so when other people had ideas that greatly improved the current design, I was usually quick to recognize and champion their contributions. The biggest example was when Mike Mearls and Rich Baker came up with the plan to phrase power usage as a mix of at-will, encounter, and daily powers. My earlier plans had been too

finicky, focusing on recharge mechanisms varying for the different classes and power sources. When Mike and Rich proposed this alternative, its simplicity and utility turned it into the foundation of the design.

On the other side of the coin, there were cases in which my role was to fix gameplay issues with approaches to the design that no

one else had foreseen. Two examples of such moments came when we wanted to fix saving throws and death. Both of these mechanical elements pivot on threats to the PCs: the moments that the game risks not being fun as a character or an entire party fails or dies. But without the threat of failure, victory rings hollow.

So for both saving throws and death, I had to think carefully about maintaining tension and uncertainty

"I take a lot of pleasure in setting up hugely dramatic settings and wild magical environments for the PCs to explore."



while giving PCs good chances of recovering from debilitating conditions and even having a chance of leaping up dramatically from what had appeared to be their death scene. The mechanics had to strike a balance between threat, heroic recovery, and simplicity.

And how do you feel about the final results? Have any holes surfaced? Changes you wish you'd made?

I love the game that resulted. My current 4E campaign is the most fun I've had running a game, ever, and I can focus my design time creating the story background and figuring out new hooks the PCs may be interested in instead of spending a lot of time wrestling with adventure and monster design. Running the game is easy. And I love the work we did on the cosmology: the points of light background and the cosmos' deep history.

Knowing what I know now, I might have worked for *smaller* changes in the world, since shifting both the world and the mechanics at the same time proved difficult for some of the D&D faithful to swallow. But that difficulty in swallowing is all mixed up with missteps involving the OGL/GSL and electronic publishing plans.

From a design perspective, the

things I would have wanted to change about 4E mostly center on the knowledge that the class design project wasn't entirely finished upon release. I'd never wanted to use the exact same power structure for the wizard as every other class, for example, but we ran out of time, and had to use smaller variations to express class differences than I had originally expected. When you see new classes like the monk and the psion and the rune priest, classes that are markedly different than earlier classes in the game, you're seeing a natural expression of the freedom allowed within 4E design. I'm looking forward to seeing how that design continues; I think that both 4E players and a few people who haven't yet been playing 4E are going to like the new stuff that will be published later this year.

And where are your footprints the most noticeable in the 4E Forgotten Realms? Least noticeable, but nonetheless important?

When we did the 3E *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, I was a junior member of the D&D Worlds team, but somehow, I ended up getting to write big swathes of the world material for that campaign setting, scattering personal

touches throughout the world and possibly even more so in *Monstrous Compendium: Creatures of Faerun*.

When we tackled the *Forgotten Realms* for 4E, our design teams were organized in a slightly peculiar fashion; it ended up not working for long, but that's another story. I was leading the mechanical design team. We were responsible mainly for game mechanics, less so for the world story and for writing the prose that filled most of our books. So when Bruce Cordell and Ed Greenwood and Chris Sims and others were putting together the pieces of the new campaign setting, I was mostly designing or overseeing the game mechanics appearing in the *Forgotten Realms Players Guide*.

As the work turned out, I personally ended up creating the new mechanics for the drow; handling all the art, concepting, story, and mechanics for the genasi; designing a whole mess of paragon paths; the Chosen epic destiny; the channel divinity feats for the FR gods; and the new dark pact class for the warlock. The dark pact was the contribution I was happiest with. Some WotC co-workers disagreed with me, but I felt that in a book that was re-introducing the drow, we needed to provide a drow-flavored character class option. The

Alarums & Excursions

If you're interested in Lee Gold's roleplaying fanzine, you'll find the current *Alarums & Excursions* purchasing and contribution information at <http://www.conchord.org/xeno/aande.html> Kobold approved!

warlock's blend of arcane magic and forbidden power seemed perfect for the drow, but the existing star and fey pacts didn't feel right for them. So I had a blast writing the dark pact powers and flavor to take advantage of all the deceased drow gods that had been slain by Lolth in recently published FR novels/history.

Meanwhile Rich Baker, Bob Schwalb, and Logan Bonner handled the swordmage class and Bruce Cordell put everything together as well as designing the spellscars.

In the terms you're using, footprints across the 4E *Forgotten Realms*, I think that Bruce's footprints are clearest, particularly since he was—and is—busy writing cool Realms novels that gave him a strong and wide perspective on the Realms.

What kind of GM are you?

I start every session as a joyous GM. I take a lot of pleasure in setting up hugely dramatic settings and wild magical environments for the PCs to explore. I don't over-prepare. I prepare a few encounters for each session and focus on the things that will make each distinct and exciting and memorable compared to all others. I keep track of what's going on behind the scenes and sprinkle story elements into every combat scene as well as ladling them thick when the PCs are out of combat choosing their paths through the world or their social networks.

Improvisation is a strength, including improv based on ideas the players bring up or mutter about worriedly. My weaknesses surface when I'm too busy to think enough

about the game before a session; improvisation without conscious understanding of what might be most wonderful and interesting to the PCs can come off flat.

On the surface, I don't appear to remain joyous. I tend to get very caught up in the fortunes of my NPCs and monsters. Of course, I actually want the PCs to struggle to glorious victory. But as GM, I *roleplay* as if I want the PCs to fail, exulting over my monster's critical hits and cunning maneuvers. My current group enjoys the sense that they are beating me down by pushing ahead to victory. With a less extroverted and bombastic group, I'd alter my GMing style.

The part of my style that doesn't alter is that I love cutting deals. I'm willing to let players attempt nearly anything they can think of or receive rewards that might seem far greater than expected. But every such reward or exceedingly unlikely magical stunt has a price, one that I try to phrase so that there is a non-zero chance that the player/PC will accept it. Thus, I complicate the PCs' lives with problems that are partially of their own construction. At a convention game, I heard one player snarl to another, "Do not listen to any more of his deals!" and had to burst out laughing.

Aside from D&D, the game I've loved running most in the past is *Feng Shui*. The new RPG I'm most likely to run this year is *Heroquest*, set in a variant heretical Glorantha of my creation instead of the canonical version of that wonderful fantasy world.

What's the basic idea of *Emperor's Gambit* and how have you improved on the earlier deck?

I knew there was room for another *Three-Dragon Ante* design back when I designed the first set. When I heard about an opening in WotC's publishing schedule, I proposed a new set, started designing it a couple days later. All along, my plan was to provide 70 new cards that could be mixed together with cards from the original set, using the same rules but providing a different play experience.

Three-Dragon Ante is about choosing goals, maximizing your chance to win or score a special flight, and squeezing the most out of every card. Given that it has been taken into the world

of D&D as a gambling game played in taverns, barracks, and palaces, I wanted the new set to have a few more ways for players to increase the stakes and try to run other players out of gold. The first *Three-Dragon Ante* had many ways for players to steal gold from the stakes. In comparison, this version has more ways for players who are gambling that they can win to make everyone add gold to the stakes. A few of the new colors of dragon, notably the earthquake dragon, share this intent to increase the amount of gold flowing between players during the game.

Several of the new cards in *Emperor's Gambit* have ante effects, abilities that function when the card goes into the ante or while it remains in the ante. Ante effects change the way everyone plays, but since they can be removed by cards like the Spy (or a Bronze Dragon from the original set) or a number flight, players have to balance

"I wrote about everything from the Mexican Masked Wrestlers Save Santa Claus game ... to stories about riding to GenCon on a bus with a crazy man."

their play against the chance that an ante effect is about to disappear.

At the moment, I enjoy games with *Emperor's Gambit* more than games with the first set. There are more opportunities to turn nothing-into-something, fewer moments when you're just screwed. But I suspect the absolute best way to play may be to mix a few of the cards from each set together. I've thought about these possibilities but I haven't played many games mixing the cards from the two sets together yet, something I'm looking forward to.

You've contributed to *Alarums & Excursions* (A&E). Something about the spirit of A&E seems to fit with your approach to design and play.

I still get *A&E*, but I haven't been reading it closely in recent years. It's the nature of *A&E* to be a conversation, with contributors commenting on each other's words despite the minimum 1-month time lag. At this stage, *A&E* is a community of gamers who are fond of each other by virtue of long association and mutual investments of time. The community is certainly open to newcomers, though newcomers are a self-selected bunch given the instant-communication protocols available on the internet.

A&E is still a freeform discussion zone for roleplaying theorists and a good spot for extensive roleplaying write-ups for roleplaying pragmatists. Before the internet surfaced, *A&E*'s contributors included dozens of game designers, game writers, and publishers. In my generation, contributors included people like Robin Laws, Jonathan Tweet, Chris Pramas, John Nephew, Scott Bennie, Nicole Lindroos, James Wallis, Spike Jones, Eric Goldberg, Mark Rein•Hagen, the list goes on.

Despite its 20th century tech as a printed fanzine, *A&E*'s RPG interests aren't entirely old school. It'd be more accurate to say that you can find voices from every one of the *many* old schools of roleplaying gaming, along with people who try most every new indie RPG.

Back in the day when I was a sporadic contributor to *A&E*, I wrote about everything from the *Mexican Masked Wrestlers Save Santa Claus* game I'd played in Toronto while visiting Robin Laws to stories about riding to GenCon on a bus with a crazy man who had a sawed-off shotgun to the secret origins of Zelazny's *Nine Princes in Amber* series as a set of folktales about a primal family that could be traced from China back to Egypt and thence to Africa.

The last contribution, the Amber hoax, carries something of the flavor of the work I'm doing on the new books I'm writing, so as usual, early work in *A&E* was setting me up for this future self's writing career.

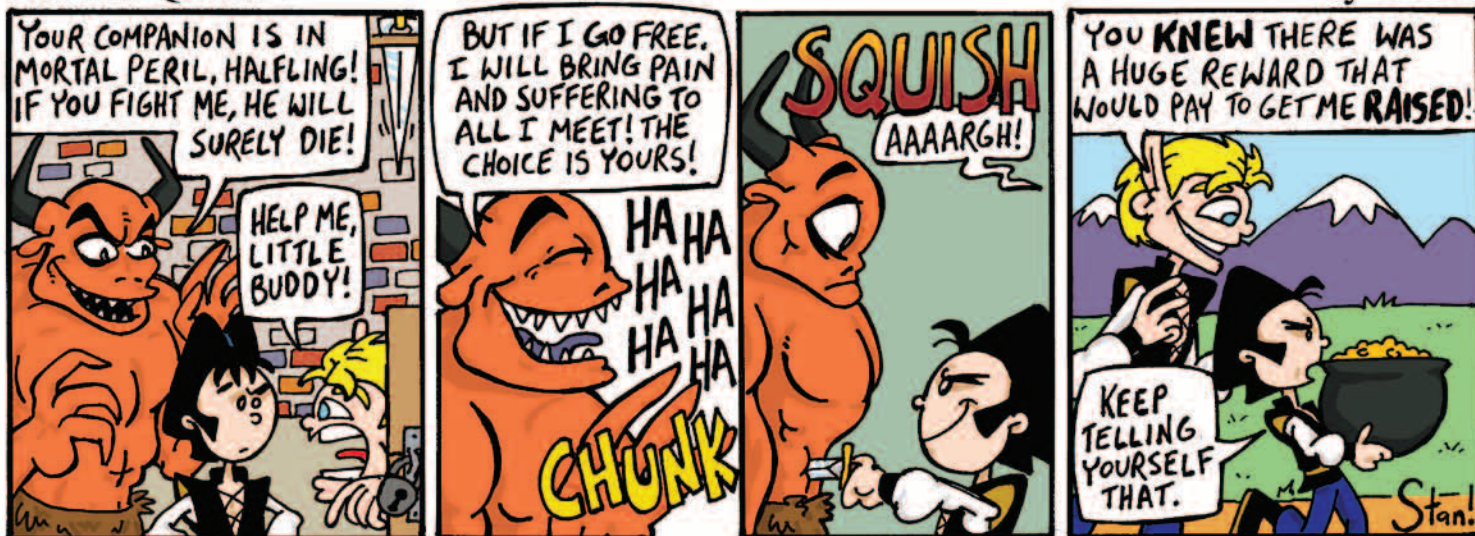
What project(s) have you been working on these days?

In the last month, I've been working mostly on two new board games. Recently, I've also worked on a book formatted something like a game that is mostly non-fiction; another book that is sort of about gaming that is largely fiction with a bit of non-fiction; basic design of an iPhone game; and a few smaller projects I'll eventually discuss on my blog at robheinsoo.livejournal.com. In the next couple of weeks, I'm likely to sign some contracts for writing D&D-related material via the OGL, but like the things I mentioned above, I'm not going to be specific because this work is a long way from being published.

I was originally going to say that my future RPG work was likely to remain D&D centered or be aimed at existing systems. But when phrasing that response I started thinking about the RPG I'd like to design, something no one else has come close to doing. Maybe I'll tap into it in the next year or two. Ω

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Paper Treasures

By John Baichtal

Glittering gold, magical lore, a queen's lost jewels: these feature prominently in the imaginations of adventurers as they set off looking for treasure. But other valuables, neither glittery nor glowing, can be found as well. These paper treasures await discovery, but because they aren't intrinsically valuable—vellum and ink fetching a lower price even than silver—each must come with an adventure seed, a trail to investigate, promising PCs wealth and peril.

Artificers' Guildbook

The PCs find a beautiful golden book, large and massively heavy, secured with a cunning mechanical lock. Even if they break the book open, the PCs find the contents written in an unfamiliar language that defies all magical translation.

This is the official guildbook of the Artificer's Guild, who build mechanical devices ranging from crude siege engines to clockwork automata. Joining their guild requires sponsorship, patience, and a great deal of gold. Upon entry, an apprentice must slave for years as the guild's secrets are doled out in ones and twos. One of the secrets these neophytes eventually learn is how to read and write the guild's secret language.

Needless to say, the guild isn't interested in paying to get their property back. Conversely, certain wizards, sages, and non-guild tinkers would love to acquire the book. Or perhaps, a PC might undertake to somehow learn the guild language, thereby learning the book's secrets.

Gremule Family Tree

Digging through a pile of charred documents, the PCs discover the

remains of a holy book, torn and burned. Remarkably, the first ten pages are untouched and contain the records of a family's births and deaths going back a dozen or more generations. It so happens that the family, Clan Gremule, has expanded greatly since the book was last updated over a century before, with multiple offshoots and clans of distant cousins. If the PCs investigate the family, they may realize that all records of the older generations have been lost—this family tree is the last remaining record of those early days.

If the PCs return the fragment to the family, they discover that the Gremules are a fractious and power hungry bunch, and the family tree unleashes a grell's nest of arguments as some lines of inheritance are revealed to be false while others are proven authentic. How does this affect the PCs? Those Gremules who stand to benefit from the document's revelations look favorably on the party while those disenfranchised will hate them. Perhaps the PCs will get sucked into this intra-family feud!

Lady Zolana's Diary

This smallish diary is packed with tiny but readable letters: the daily musings of a woman calling herself Lady Zolana. The journal reads like a cheap novel describing the petty machinations of a bored noblewoman: tawdry affairs described in pornographic detail, overblown political scandals, the squabbling of cliques, and the betrayal of misplaced trust. When reading the diary, an adventurer might be tempted to try to track down Zolana and return the diary for a reward—or perhaps to blackmail her.

While Zolana isn't the lady's real



name, her flair for describing the members of the court made it easy to locate her. She is Uvaana, a young baroness with a love for courtly intrigue. Less well known is her career as a high-level wizard, and if it comes to blackmail, she certainly uses all of her powers to protect her reputation. Even if the PCs return the diary to her in a forthright manner, seeking no reward, Uvaana may decide to eliminate them simply for knowing all her indiscretions. Other members of the court may be just as interested in the diary as Uvaana or more, the better to destroy her reputation, and they might pay an enormous sum for it—or simply kill the finders and keep the book.

Reskkab-Yamur Treaty

The party finishes the latest adventure, all in a day's work. But part of the monster's treasure is a courier's scroll tube, missing the official seal. Inside are an authentic-seeming series of documents dated 20 years ago, a treaty resolving the territorial dispute between two small kingdoms, Reskkab and Yamur.

Historians might remember that nobles from Yamur were attacked and slain by hill giants on their way back from negotiations, and the dispute lingered on. The discovery of a signed treaty would do wonders to resolving the lingering disputes between the two nations.

Only problem is, the treaty is a forgery. Agents from Reskkab have planted the faked documents that detail the resolution of the dispute in their kingdom's favor—analyzing the treaty reveals the Yamur side “agreed” to some fairly major territorial concessions. Then they arranged for some gullible do-gooders to find the documents.

What happens next? That depends on how much value the PCs place on the treaty. If they're angling for a reward for “finding” the treaty, the Reskkab side will lobby them to support the treaty and vouch for its authenticity, paying them well for their time. The Yamurites will be less enthusiastic, but peace-loving cliques and Reskkab agents will pressure their king to ratify the treaty. Guess who will be blamed when the treaty is revealed as a forgery?

Tormay's Letter

The PCs find a stained and tattered letter in the possession of some bandits. Dated a couple of months prior, the letter seems innocuous at first: a young lord's idle correspondence, describing a stay in a distant kingdom. Depending on the reader's Intelligence and skill with the language, he or she may realize the cadences of the letter are odd... the language alternates between floral and stilted with sentences sometimes making little sense or else are written with the flair of a poet.

The truth is that Tormay is a prisoner and his letter contains coded instructions on how to rescue him. Once the party realizes this, they'll have to decipher the instructions, which lead them through a dark forest and a maze of tunnels.

Of course, Tormay offers a vast fortune to whoever rescues him. Ω

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Kobold Quarterly 14 53

Middle Class Magic

By Adam Daigle

Curios, bric-a-brac, knick-knacks—the jumble spills from the canvas-covered stall on the edge of the Kobold Ghetto. Pentrick plies his wares here among the street markets of Zobeck, always looking for a big score. While this shifty kobold already lives extravagantly in the Free City, the cunning creature always looks for more.

A devious and wicked entrepreneur, Pentrick owns a workhouse below the city in cramped warrens and filled with indentured servants—cranks out simple arcane trinkets. His own clockwork beetle lies always within arm's reach, and he offers similar magic to fit any size purse.

In case of bothersome visitors to his stall, Pentrick has rigged it with a handful of street traps (see *Zobeck Gazetteer*), and uncovering the low, drapery-covered table reveals a trapdoor leading directly into the nearby warrens, also laced with a series of menacing traps, of course. Visitors whispering the secret phrase—“*Little is bigger where the river winds*,” an obvious bait for forced appreciation of Pentrick and his kin—gain access to his more interesting wares.

His magic items, popular with the well-to-do merchants cramming the Free City, provide easy solutions to mundane worries. Both visiting adventurers and those who call Zobeck home find Pentrick's utilitarian items essential. These simple magic items bring fledgling adventurers and wealthy citizens to the cramped kobold warrens in droves.

BLINDING LANTERN

Aura faint enchantment; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 900 gp; **Weight** 3 lb.

Pentrick's Mundane Magic Items

Item	Market Price
<i>Blinding lantern</i>	900 gp
<i>Boots of solid footing</i>	1,100 gp
<i>Brawler's leather</i>	250 gp
<i>Burglar's key and lock</i>	1,000 gp
<i>Hardening polish</i>	400 gp
<i>Jungle mess kit</i>	500 gp
<i>Scoundrel's gambit</i>	50 gp
<i>Shifting shirt</i>	850 gp
<i>Spicebox spoon</i>	700 gp
<i>Spider grenade</i>	300 gp
<i>Tactile gel</i>	250 gp
<i>Tailor's clasp</i>	1,100 gp
<i>Whispering powder</i>	250 gp

DESCRIPTION

This ornate brass lantern comes fitted with heavily inscribed plates shielding the cut crystal lens. With a flick of a lever as a standard action, the plate rises, unleashing a dazzling array of lights at a single target within 30 ft. The wielder must use two hands to direct the lights precisely into the eyes of a foe.

The targeted creature becomes dazed for 1 round (Will DC 11). A creature dazed by the lantern is immune to its effects for 1 minute afterward. Creatures with 5 or more HD are immune to the effects of the lantern. By opening the shutter on the opposite side, the device functions as a normal bull's-eye lantern, yet illuminates magically, requiring no fuel and giving off no heat.

The power can be used at will in dark conditions; it has no effect in full daylight.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *daze*; **Cost** 450 gp

BOOTS OF SOLID FOOTING

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 2nd
Slot feet; **Price** 1,100 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A thick, rubbery sole covers the bottom and sides of these stout leather boots. Useful for maneuvering cluttered alleyways, slick sewers, and the

occasional patch of ice or gravel, they allow you to travel normally and without hindrance over difficult terrain for up to 15 ft. in a 24-hour period.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have 5 ranks in Acrobatics; **Cost** 550 gp

BRAWLER'S LEATHER

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot hands; **Price** 250 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

These rawhide straps carry lines of crimson runes running along their length. They require 10 minutes of preparation: bathing them in salt water before carefully wrapping them around your forearms.

Once fitted, they provide you with a +1 enhancement bonus to unarmed attacks and damage. The straps become brittle once they set and only last for your next 10 attacks before crumbling away.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *magic fang*; **Cost** 125 gp

BURGLAR'S LOCK AND KEY

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 1,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This heavy iron lock bears a stout, pitted key permanently fixed in the keyhole. Using a standard action to twist the key counterclockwise, you instantly open one door, chest, bag, bottle, or container within 30 ft. (Note, this does not unlock them.) Cautious rogues and lazy nobles frequently make use of this device. Any container or portal weighing more than 30 lb. or restrained in any way (latched, bolted, tied) automatically resists this effect.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *open/close*; **Cost** 500 gp

HARDENING POLISH

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 1,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Useful to those encountering heavily armored clockwork guardians and formidable golems, this unguent, when applied to a melee weapon, hardens its edge and strengthens the material for a brief period. Once applied, it gives the weapon or material the properties of adamantite for 10 rounds before wearing off. A vial of hardening polish coats a single melee weapon or 20 units of ammunition.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item; **Cost** 500 gp

JUNGLE MESS KIT

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This crucial piece of survival gear guarantees safe use of the most basic of consumables. The hinged metal container acts as a cook pot and opens to reveal a cup, plate, and eating utensils. Whether facing stagnant pond water or worm-infested small game, this kit renders any spoiled, rotten, or even poisonous food safe to consume. It can purify only mundane, natural ill effects and functions on up to 1 cu. ft. of food and drink, 3/day.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *purify food and drink*; **Cost** 250 gp

SCOUNDREL'S GAMBIT

Aura faint evocation; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 100 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This fluted silver tube bears tiny runes etched between the grooves. Barely 2 inches long, this device easily hides within a sleeve, ready for when you need it most. Card sharps working dangerous gambling halls as well as dancing girls and prostitutes in grim bordellos frequently keep one of these nearby. Held in hand and using the command word and a standard action, you fire off a single *magic missile* at a chosen target within 100 ft.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *magic missile*; **Cost** 50 gp

SHIFTING SHIRT

Aura faint illusion; **CL** 1st
Slot body; **Price** 850 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Used by vain, lower-tier merchants, courtiers, and rascals alike, this non-descript article of clothing shifts at your whim. One moment, it resembles filthy beggar's robes and

the next, glistening court attire. Your appearance cannot be changed, only your mode of dress. Anyone physically interacting with you might see through the illusion (Will DC 12).

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *silent image*; **Cost** 425 gp

SPICEBOX SPOON

Aura faint universal; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 700 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This lacquered wooden spoon carries with it an entire cupboard within its smooth contours. When you swirl this spoon in any mixture, whether drink or stew, it exudes a flavorful aroma, infusing with the edibles. This culinary wonder mimics any imagined variation of simple seasonings, from simple salt and pepper to aromatic herbs and complex spice blends. These flavors only persist for 1 hour, so it is best to eat quickly.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *prestidigitation*; **Cost** 350 gp

SPIDER GRENADE

Aura faint conjuration; **CL** 3rd
Slot —; **Price** 300 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This preserved spider, silver runes burned into its hairy legs and plump abdomen, barely fits in an adult human's hand. It can be thrown up to 30 ft. as a grenade-like weapon. When the spider grenade hits a solid surface, it explodes into a sticky burst of fibrous webs, as the spell *web*, ensnaring everyone within a 20-ft. radius. These webs persist for 30 minutes before crumbling to dust.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *web*; **Cost** 150 gp

TACTILE UNGUENT

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th
Slot —; **Price** 250 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Cat burglars, gear workers, locksmiths, and even street performers often use this gooey substance, for it increases the sensitivity of your hands. Any tactile Perception checks, Sleight of Hand checks, or Disable Device checks receive a +10 competence bonus for 1 hour.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, the creator must possess 5 ranks in the following skills: Disable Device, Perception, Sleight of Hand; **Cost** 125 gp

Costing Arcane Powers for the Non-Arcanist

The *scoundrel's gambit* was originally priced at 50 gp, and it still seemed too cheap. While a one-shot scroll prices out at 25 gp, this is an item useable by any class and not requiring any Use Magic Device skill check—features which make the *scoundrel's gambit* eminently abusable by any orc, minion, henchman, or other cannon fodder in the game. The cost has been doubled to 100 gp, but it's still quite inexpensive for what it does. Introduce to your campaign with caution.

TAILOR'S CLASP

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 2nd
Slot —; **Price** 1,100 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This ornate brooch often appears in the form of a jeweled weaving spider or scarab beetle. When activated, it skitters across the attached fabric, mending any tears, adjusting frayed hems and reinforcing seams. This item only works on objects made out of fibrous material such as clothing, rope, and rugs. When used on any of these items, the clasp removes the broken condition.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *mending*; **Cost** 550 gp

WHISPERING POWDER

Aura faint illusion; **CL** 1st
Slot —; **Price** 250 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

When sprinkled from its paper envelope, this fine dust covers a 10 by 10 ft. area which then reacts audibly to friction. Any creature stepping on an area dusted with whispering powder causes loud squeals and pops to erupt with each footfall, alerting all within earshot.

As the creator dictates the manner of sounds created by *whispering powder*, custom variations are available at a 20% markup. *Whispering powder* acts like an alarm when placed at tunnel entrances and near doorways. Once set off, the powder becomes inert, but otherwise, it lasts indefinitely.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item; **Cost** 125 gp Ω

Book Reviews

By William Banks & Pierce Watters

THE BEST OF JOE R. LANSDALE

Joe R. Lansdale

Tachyon Publications, February 2010

384 pages, US \$15.95

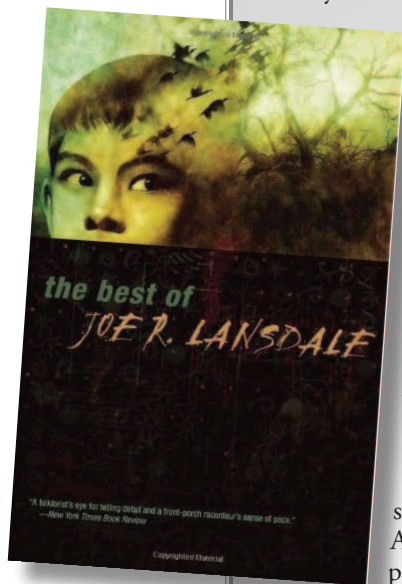
Review by Pierce
Watters

Joe R. Lansdale has won the British Fantasy Award, the American Horror Award, an Edgar, and seven Bram Stoker Awards, and in 2007, he was named Grand Master at the World Horror Convention. *The New York Times* singled out Joe's novel, *The Bottoms* and compared it to *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Not bad for an old country boy from East Texas.

Joe is probably best known for writing the story that became a cult-classic film, *Bubba Ho-Tep*. You know, the film wherein Elvis and JFK are sequestered in an East Texas nursing home that is being haunted and preyed upon by an ancient Egyptian mummy? Yeah, THAT film, with Bruce Campbell as Elvis and Ossie Davis as JFK.

Now, Tachyon has released a new collection of Lansdale short stories, *The Best of Joe R. Lansdale*. You get 16 very fine, well-crafted stories from a unique writer. No one else writes like Lansdale. Really, no one. And each of his stories is different with mysteries, murders, horror, and even a mule race.

There is not space here to take you through each story, but it starts off with "Godzilla's Twelve-Step Program" and then "Bubba Ho-Tep," the



Joe Lansdale writes:

There's nothing I like better than a good story. Like the one that was told to me by an old man who had a stool on a street corner in Gladewater, Texas, near my father's garage. He sat there during the day and drank beer that he never took out of the paper sack. He just wrapped the paper around the top so that the lip of the bottle was visible. He sat there and drank in a way that everyone knew he liked drinking. He wore a coat, winter or summer. He wore work boots without laces and no socks. He had a hat that looked as if a family of rats had once lived in it.

When he saw me walk by he always told me something.

Once, he told me a story. It wasn't much of a story, but I do remember the punch line.

And then the thing ate them all.

Actually, that's quite an image and hard to beat and is more memorable than most stories at greater length. There's a lesson in that.

And Then The Thing Ate Them All.

Cool.

Oh, now that I think about it. That really isn't the end of the story. There was a sight gag to go with it, and one more line. After the old man said, And Then The Thing Ate Them All, he pulled his hand out of his pocket and held up his arm. His hand was gone and it looked as if it had been chewed off. When I gasped, he said, "All but me, that is."

original. "Mad Dog Summer" became part of *The Bottoms*.

Farther along comes "On the Far Side of the Cadillac Desert with Dead Folks," "Hell Through a Windshield," and it finishes with "Night They Missed the Horror Show." This is country fiction, poor folk's fiction, and southern fiction. Horror, humor, mystery, and fantasy. And one of the best stories Lansdale ever wrote, "White Mule, Spotted Pig," is neither horror nor fantasy, well maybe a little of the latter. It's about a mule race and is one of the finest short stories anyone ever wrote.

If you are familiar with Joe R. Lansdale, this book will make you happy. If you have never read him, start here.

THE RIVER KING'S ROAD: A NOVEL OF ITHELAS

Liane Merciel

Gallery, March 2010

385 pages, \$26.00

Reviewed by Pierce Watters

Roleplaying gamer Liane Merciel starts off her novel-writing career with a bang. *The River King's Road: A Novel of Ithelas* is the first in a series. The characters are many, varied, and infinitely fascinating. Brys Tarnell is a mercenary. His instincts and skills help him survive the massacre of the village of Willowfield: a massacre whose purpose is to assassinate the heir to the kingdom of Oakharne and his family. Brys escapes along with the dead lord's infant son. He soon encounters the

peasant Odoose and her baby son, both of whom, by dint of good luck, were not in Willowfield when all the people and animals died.

Involved in the killings is Severine, a maimed-witch, one of the Thorn, who kills with blood magic and is accompanied by her undead minions, the ghoul-hounds.

Lord Leferic is the new heir to Oakharne. He is ruthless in his desire for ultimate power. Or is he? Can a brother-murderer fret over his acts? Is murder made in the name of peace really murder?

Then there is Sir Kelland the “Burnt Knight”: a blessed knight of the Sun and pledged to the goddess Celestia. Kelland has the might and magic to stand against Severine, perhaps. But will he risk his beautiful companion Bitharn, a warrior in her own right?

The River King's Road is an incredible first novel, rich and filled with meaningful characters. These characters are real people who hurt and laugh, and they sweep the reader along with them in a complex and exciting adventure. And one of the best things... there is more to come. The hard part is waiting to see what next befalls our heroes and villains, and who is which?

This is not *A Song of Ice and Fire*—it's all its own—but if you love the fantasy of George R.R. Martin, you will love *The River King's Road*. If you love heroic fantasy, you will love *The River King's Road*, and if you love fantasy roleplaying, you will love *The River King's Road*. Buy it now in hard cover, do not wait. Read it. Then wait on tenterhooks until the next book arrives. Highly recommended.



Merciel writes:

I was a gamer long before I tried my hand at fiction writing, although the two have always been intertwined. (My first-ever fiction submission, at age 13, was to *Dragon* magazine, which had just published its 200th issue featuring a Margaret Weis story that completely blew my mind because [spoiler!] the bad guy won. Because he was smart! This idea proved influential in later life). Being a GM is one of the best ways to learn worldbuilding, plot development, and how to write NPCs—uh, I mean, “characters”—with distinct personalities. And if you're blessed (or cursed) with critically minded PCs, you quickly learn the importance of doing your research and avoiding plot holes.

Very, very quickly.

STALKING THE DRAGON: A FABLE OF TONIGHT

Mike Resnick

Pyr, August 2009

296 pages, \$15.98

Review by Pierce Watters

The horned, almost 7-ft.-tall Buffalo Bill Brody arrives just as detective John Justin Mallory is leaving his office to take his partner, Col. Winnifred Carruthers, to dinner. It is Valentine's Day and Brody is in a panic. His show dragon, the toy-class Fluffy who is the favorite to win the Eastminster pet show, has been, well... dragon-napped.

Stalking the Dragon is the third book in a series by often-award-winning Mike Resnick. It follows *Stalking the Unicorn* and *Stalking the Vampire*. Mallory, down on his luck, has stumbled into an alternate Manhattan peopled with zombies and goblins and elves and all sorts of fantastic creatures, and he fits right in. He solves crimes with his partner Col. Carruthers, and his office cat, Felina.



Of course, Felina is a human-sized talking cat with an insatiable appetite for anything edible and the need to have her back skritch. And there is a difference between skritch and scratching. Just ask Felina.

So Mallory and a band of ragtag erstwhile assistants scour Manhattan from the Frump Tower to Grazi Mansion with side trips to Fire Island and Greenwich

Village, in search of Fluffy with the Eastminster show set to begin.

Brody is not Mallory's only client. The Grundy, the most feared being in this Manhattan, has also hired Mallory. The Grundy has the reigning champion, Carmelita the chimera, and The Grundy wants to beat the best, Fluffy.

Stalking the Dragon is a noir mélange with a strong dose of humor. Some of the humor is sly, some is not. A lot is tongue in cheek, and it is all a delight,

with an extra bit of pleasure from the touch of Damon Runyon including Nicely Nicely Dawson, Dead End Dugan the zombie, and Harry the Book. Oh, and there's a samurai goblin.

Stalking the Dragon is fun from beginning to end. Pick up the other two books while you're at it. Highly recommended.

PRINCE OF WOLVES

By Dave Gross
Paizo Publishing,
August 2010
\$9.99, 368 pages

If you enjoy the dashing swordplay of the Musketeers and the deadly assassin's wit of Steven Brust's Vlad Taltos and the Jhereg series, then *Prince of Wolves* is a glorious surprise that reinvents the heroic odd couple in fantasy.



From *Prince of Wolves*:

“Listen.” I poked him in the chest, not too hard since I didn’t want to give him a bruise he could show the boss. “You wouldn’t even have that purse if not for me.” The young pickpocket we’d encountered earlier had been no amateur, but I’d been doing it a lot longer than his ten or twelve years. “And for that service I will gladly commend you to His Excellency,” said Nicola. “And in personal gratitude I will overlook the matter of your attracting the constabulary.”

He had me on that point. The gutter rat tried to bite me when I pinched him for the purse, and we were so close to the water that I couldn’t resist tossing him in. I should have realized he’d start crying “murder” as soon as he came up for air. Despite Nicola’s impeccable Jeggare livery, the guard who stopped us saw not a couple of innocent visitors to his fair land but a pair of foreigners with a fat purse. My devilish good looks didn’t help. Chelaxians are unwelcome enough in most places, but hellspawn are enough to start a riot.

I took a breath and gave Nicola the little smile, because threatening him wouldn’t do any good. “Listen, the guard just wanted a little taste. That’s what I was trying to tell you.”

“You mean something like a bribe?” Nicola’s cheeks colored.

Desna weeps. “I mean exactly like a bribe.”

“Don’t be absurd. He repeatedly stated that his only concern was the welfare of that street urchin—”

“Who scarpered off because he was a pickpocket.”

“—and the maintenance of peaceful conduct on the waterfront—”

“Which was disturbed by the urchin who lifted your purse.”

“If your Varisian amounted to more than a few phrases for ordering beer and engaging the services of prostitutes, you would have understood that the man was only doing his duty.”

“Then why was he holding his hand out like this?” I showed him.

Dave Gross may be more familiar to gamers as an editor of *Dragon Magazine*, *Amazing Stories*, and others, but he is also an accomplished novelist of the *Forgotten Realms*, and with this book, reaches a breakthrough in his career. Gross’s wit is keener than most, and his ability to turn a courtly phrase and drench a werewolf brawl in gore are both, frankly, delightful. This novel bodes extremely well for the new *Pathfinder Tales* line.

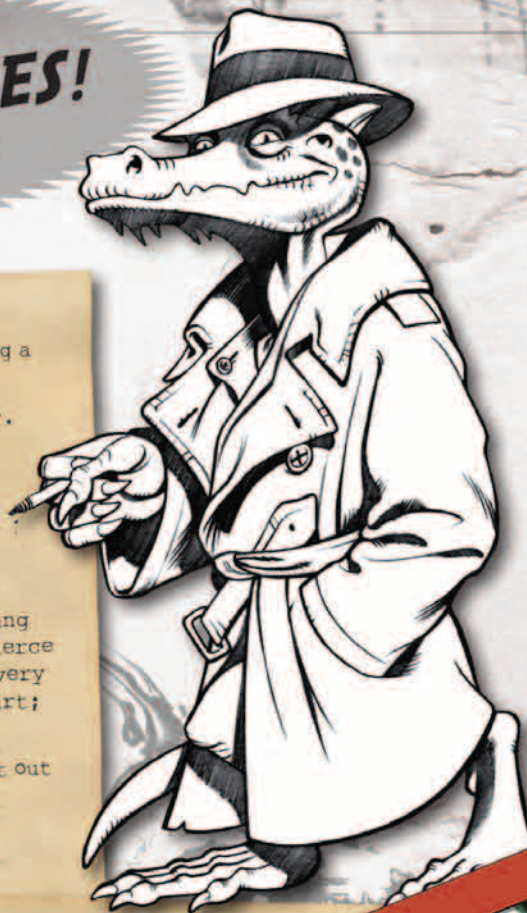
The story begins with a bit of a thud, as you may have seen a “trapped in a coffin” prologue element in any number of Hollywood flicks – but the story picks up unstoppable momentum with the return of Count Varian Jeggare to Ustalav. Jeggare is the half-elven fox among many human hens, and soon we’re caught up in the

whirlwind of a plot involving Urgathoa cultists as well as an old enemy of the Whispering Tyrant, a lich-villain who deserves his iconic status in Golarion. Gross does justice to the dark, Gothic tone of the setting.

I won’t spoil the fun of the slow uncovering of disaster upon dismay that Gross spins out with such perfect timing. The book’s genius lies in the pairing of Radovan and Varian, the brute tiefling bodyguard of devil-dominated Chelax with the silky-smooth-but-delicate half-elven spellcaster. It’s a classic pairing with heroic chemistry as good as any in fantasy, and I look forward to reading many more of their adventures in future installments.

Highly recommended for all fans of fantasy adventure yarns, whether you play in the *Pathfinder* setting or any other. Ω

KOBOLD Quarterly presents:
THRILLING KOBOLD STORIES!
EXCERPTS FROM THE TWO-FISTED CASEBOOK OF
JIRO JAWFANG, KOBOLD DETECTIVE!



THE CASE OF THE KOBOLD QUARTERLY

Jiro lit a foulweed stick. With Watch Commander Stormshield keeping a lid on the Kobold Ghetto, things were getting ugly.

Just then, Reteep Slyfingers came running down the alley. "Help me, Jiro! You've got to hide me!" The smaller kobold's scales were pink with terror. "Someone tipped off the Watch that I found those issues of Kobold Quarterly next to that dead courier. Help me!"

No wonder Stormshield was on the warpath. Published by former Dragon magazine editor Wolfgang Baur, Kobold Quarterly was the premier small-but-fierce magazine for fans of fantasy and horror roleplaying. Every issue was filled with priceless gaming texts and works of art; dozens had gone missing during the uprising.

Jiro heard the tramp of heavy boots approaching. "I stick my snout out for nobody." He turned his back on the stunned rogue and walked away, disappearing into the night fog.

THE CASE OF THE THIRD BOOK

Jiro took a bottle from his desk drawer and poured himself two fingers of whisky. "Want some?" he said as he added two fingers—elven ones—for flavor.

"No, thank you," said his visitor. She tossed three glossy paperbacks onto his desk: *The Kobold Guide to Game Design*. Jiro knew them, all right.

"Say, sister, what're you playing at?" he snapped. "These books are the best resource around for anyone who wants to run a better campaign, or become a professional game designer. Tons of essays by the top talent in the field: tips on reading your audience, pacing, drama, running a playtest ..."

She nodded. "And how to write genres from Noir to Arabian, even city adventures."

"All that and more," Jiro said. "But everyone knows there are only two volumes of that gold."

She shook her head. "*The Kobold Guide to Game Design Volume III* has more than 15 essays by an all-star lineup of industry veterans: Wolfgang Baur, Monte Cook, Ed Greenwood... even 4th Edition D&D lead designer Rob Heinsoo."

Heinsoo was involved in this caper? Jiro took a swig of whiskey; elven knucklebones clacked against his fangs. Yeah, things were about to get interesting in Zobeck.

THE CASE OF THE OPEN DESIGN

Jiro met the warlock's eyes, ignoring the ash wand pointed at his snout. "I'm telling you the truth," he said evenly. "These adventures were created under the patronage model.

Anyone can become a Patron at Open Design for just a few coppers. Patrons provide suggestions and feedback, design sections of the adventure, even playtest it before publication."

"You lie!" said the warlock. "That business model hasn't existed since the Renaissance!"

Jiro could tell the guy was losing it. How could he explain to this maniac that *Sunken Empires*, *Imperial Gazetteer*, *Tales of the Old Margreve* and *Courts of the Shadow Fey*, some of the best RPG products on the market, had all been crowdsourced by Open Design?

"Let me give you the address of a website," he said.

WWW.KOBOLDQUARTERLY.COM



How to Create Memorable Characters

By Ed Greenwood

Art by Russ Nicholson

Dark and damp fog shroud the dirty city night, and all-too-few lamps utterly fail to pierce the gloom. The cobbles are slick underfoot.

An unpleasant and vaguely menacing locale, but until screams or howls break the silence or a severed head rolls out of the gloom to fetch up against your boots, it's not necessarily memorable. However, even if no such horrors or warnings erupt, the moment you know Sherlock Holmes or Jack the Ripper is out there in the night—and lurking somewhere near—things head toward memorable fast.

The Rich Heart of Interest

First-rate roleplaying campaigns, like the best television or film or novel series, are populated by characters that interest the players. We all like to spend time with memorable characters, in real life and in our playtime diversions.

Many of the most beloved fictional sagas feature characters that fascinate us and leave us wanting more—the crew of the starship *U.S.S. Enterprise*, the Fellowship of the Ring, the long succession of Doctor Whos. One can argue that all successful television dramas have centered around characters that audiences want to see more of, and such shows are often cancelled when a character gets “used up” by having all their secrets revealed or their aims fulfilled (more about that later), fades in popularity, or vanishes due to the death or absence of an actor.

In real life, too, we want to spend time with people who fascinate us—or, if we fear them enough, people who we want to run and hide from, but we still somehow always know exactly where they are and what they're up to.

The characters in an RPG, both

those portrayed by the players and those run by the GM, are what give the campaign whatever life it has—and the more alive it seems, the more gripping and worthwhile it will be. The more memorable.

Making the Memorable

So just how does one make a character memorable?

Well, what do you first think of when someone mentions, say, Long John Silver to you? The peg leg, the lurching stride, the swirling greatcoat and tricorn hat, the baleful growl of menace, and the parrot shrieking “Pieces of eight!”

That little list of elements can be divided up into the visual and the potential, or what drives the character and, therefore, makes him useful in the plots of unfolding play. We know he's menacing, we know he has secrets, and we know he's come onto the scene to further his own dark aims; all of which make him vastly more interesting than just a sea cook. If your kindly aunt who was a great cook had come along on that voyage instead, everyone might have eaten better, but exploring *Treasure Island* would probably have been a lot safer, turned up far fewer doubloons, and been a *lot* more boring.

In fantasy RPGs, characters become memorable in two ways: 1) how the GM or player initially presents them and 2) how they interact with other characters in play (feuding, flirting, taunting, delivering spookily insane “I'll conquer the world!” monologues or “There's blood on the potatoes!” catch-phrases, and so on).

Or to put it another way, every player crafts a mental image of each character in the world from the moment they are first described. That

image is either quickly forgotten as the character is eliminated, does nothing memorable, or is never seen again, or that image grows deeper and richer as the character acquires a “history” through unfolding play.

First Impressions

That initial image of a character tends to be both auditory, the “funny voice” adopted by the player or GM when speaking as that character, and visual. Though no one has ever seen a real Cthulhu or Sherlock Holmes, hundreds of gamers can picture those imaginary beings from images, sculptures, and movies they've seen or descriptions they've read. These mental pictures may vary from gamer to gamer: some see Sherlock Holmes in a deerstalker and tweeds with a meerschaum pipe and a magnifying glass; others may see him as a tall, lean, agile hunter in a swirling Inverness, striding forward with a walking-stick clutched in his gloved hands, burning eyes and beaky nose to the fore; and still others see him as various combinations of these elements. All of the images, however, are rooted in visual “tags” or clues provided from somewhere—from the GM's descriptions, pictures or sketches, miniatures, or artifacts, such as a real deerstalker hat or meerschaum pipe.

Characters can be memorable for a variety of reasons:

- **Physical characteristics**, such as glowing silver eyes, a missing eye covered by an ever-changing collection of strange eye patches, a peg leg, a disfiguring scar, or an arm that's been transformed into a tentacle
- **Catch-phrases**, such as “All the seas full of gold, and all of it mine,” “He's so rich, the gods

owe *him* money,” or “Oh, ye doesn’t *have* to do that—I merely recommend it, if ye’d prefer to go on living!”

- **Mode of speaking**, such as all in menacing, hissing whispers; a detached, calm, “Douglas Rain-as-HAL” declarative voice; a recurring dirty chuckle; or sudden and insane rises in tone that peaks like a small child’s voice before returning to a lower “normal” voice, only to soar again; and there’s always the inevitable various real-world accents mimicked to try to convey social class or sophistication or lack of same, such as the effete Olde English aristocrat versus the truculent or darkly humorous Cockney dockworker.

Although it’s easy to go over the top into ridiculousness with funny voices, wild phrases, and overblown behavior, just where that line is depends on the group of players or, rather, the experience each of them brings to the gaming table—and it might be further along than you think. Many a gamer has sat at a table suffering through the bad Monty Python impersonations of fellow players, but if everyone is having a hoot, then that tone may be perfect for that group of players, at that time.

Being a Superior Thespian

After the initial presentation of the character—body shape, and—clothing, physical looks, speech, and mannerisms—a character gains depth and color by their words and deeds. These words and deeds might start with the character’s manner of movement—from dangerously agile and energetic to limping or reeling-wounded, but really they are more often shown by dialogue and action.

Strong, immediately apparent motivations or obsessions, such as “I search the world over for the Black Jaw, m’lad—and when I find him, *then* the blood will run, and it’ll be his head hacked from its shoulders... or mine!” will make a character memorable.

Coyness in motivation makes less of an impression. Strong, obvious deeds make an impression as well, such as rescuing or accusing PCs. So will exhibiting unusual abilities, such as wrenching bent and impossibly thick iron bars straight again to demonstrate awesome strength, yawningly withstanding being impaled by swords or spears, or sensing hidden or disguised creatures without apparent use of magic.

We can all think of characters from television or film that seem to keep up a steady stream of one-liners and pithy observations. That’s a lot harder to do in real life, without a stable of writers leaping into your brain to provide witty wisecracks the moment anyone gives you a cue.

However, we don’t have to all be the “life of the party” every moment of every play session—and players who try to be often manage only to be very irritating.

As one of my long-ago school football coaches once said, “My heroes aren’t the loud guys with the big smiles and the poses. They’re the ordinary guys who just remember to show up for every game.” The player or GM who can maintain a recognizable voice for every character

and return again and again to certain favorite phrases of speech can readily anchor characters as “real” in the minds of others around the gaming table. Prepare a signature line for major characters, and note it with their game stats as a reminder.

And it’s not just the DM’s job to build character, of course. The adventuring band who can banter or hold a “The Skull Baron knows who we are—*now* what do we do?” councils-of-war while speaking in character are building memorable moments effortlessly as they play. These are moments that players who seldom act out the roles of their characters, who seldom mentally move from the real world of eating chips, checking the rulebooks, and keeping an eye on the clock to “step into the game,” find far rarer and harder to achieve.

Secrets and Strivings

One school of acting is entirely built around a character’s motivations. Knowing what a character wants, needs (whether they know it or not), and is striving for allows whoever is portraying that character to improvise while always staying true to the character, no matter what strange or unforeseen situation occurs.



Knowing the backstory of a character is the simplest way of anchoring and identifying motivations, but it can be a trap. Too many writers and roleplayers get bogged down in crafting an incredibly detailed back story that risks “finishing” a character by painting in every last detail of what the character was, is, and will be until their waiting grave swallows them.

Certainly, a character driven to avenge something or someone needs some “this happened to make me this way” specifics, and it helps to know what drove a character mad if you’re trying to roleplay their current insanity convincingly and consistently, but most backstories need not do more than justify skills mastered, languages and locales known, and the motivations that will drive the character as play unfolds in the future.

It should *not*, however, drive that character absolutely and predictably.

Leave room for exceptions: situations when a character acts differently than their usual motivations would suggest. This is the unpredictable human factor that sparks interest, and it is usually rooted in a character’s deeper secrets. Those secrets could be buried well enough that even the character is unaware of them until the exceptions occur. These moments make a character more memorable because they reveal greater depth than the other players thought. Characters with secrets and hidden depths are less easily defeated, trapped, outwitted, or evaded.

So it follows that a memorable character almost always has a secret or three, both big and little.

It’s been said that “everyone loves a mystery.” That may be a bit of an exaggeration, given the unfolding body count in many mystery tales, but the truth at the heart of the statement is that humans love secrets—having or sharing them and finding them out, that is, not being kept from sharing in them.

Because we love secrets, characters become more memorable when we know they have secrets and even more so when we begin to learn their secrets. Imagine the astonishment of

discovering the massively scarred, slow-witted mountain of a castle guard, thanks to being reared by his aunt, is an expert at repairing torn elven cloaks and delicate jewelry, fencing goods to pay for that aunt’s care in her dotage. Or the revelation that your smiling, long-serving, trusted hireling has been betraying you all along to the Dark King’s spies, and the cruelly-smiling king knows down to the last ruby what treasure you’ve looted from the old royal tombs, and every thief you’ve bargained with down by the docks.

The longest-lasting characters—especially if they are villains or at least opponents of the PCs—have secrets upon secrets. The king’s always-smirking, evil vizier, for example, or the drawling, monocle-sporting duke who might be a traitor, who spins plot after plot that the party must wade through to have any hope of discovering what the character is *really* up to. Is that vizier or duke really the king’s loyal brother, sister, or lover, playing a role just to attract the traitors in the kingdom so they can all be identified, watched, and foiled? Or are they the shapechanged, not-dead-after-all former king or queen, returned from apparent death to keep an eye on their feckless successor, or the usurper who seized the throne after apparently killing them?

If the PCs guess wrong, and just lash out, the consequences will be disastrous—and in a good roleplaying campaign, the GM has already taught the players the folly of jumping to conclusions and rushing in before learning what’s really afoot, in situations when the stakes were smaller and disasters more easily contained, mended, or survived.

Reflected Glory

In real life, we like to see old friends and are excited to meet our heroes. Some people have charisma, become celebrities, and create excitement by their very presence, even among those who profess to scorn them or feign indifference in their achievements.

Excitement rises in RPGs when characters regarded as friends reappear, too—and the feeling of realism deepens

when acquaintances are seen repeatedly in the right situations. For example, imagine the player’s reaction when they meet the quarrelsome rival caravan merchants who show up every time the PCs reach a new port or market.

Establishing “big name” competing adventurers whose fame, power, and influence the PCs can only hope to achieve after years of adventuring can provide PC motivation. Perhaps these great adventurers can become rivals or corrupt sell-outs that the PCs must tackle and try to take down. Or perhaps the day will come when a foe destroys the big-name adventurers, frightening the players and leaving them as the only adventurers left who must try to fight this awesome foe.

The Naming of Names

The finishing touch in making a character memorable is the naming of that character.

We can’t all be good at making up names, but we can all take a little extra time and avoid some of the worst mistakes.

Not all characters will be dastardly villains who fit such infamous monikers as “Thulsa Doom,” but you should apply the same thought to names that real-world parents do (or all too often, it seems, forget to). Avoid silly, unintentionally comical, or just plain wrong names (such as calling a male “Delilah” or “Bertha”). Players will do what young kids do in schoolyards: make up nicknames for the character.

However, a few moments of saying a proposed name aloud or writing it out and checking what the initials spell or suggest will avoid grief later.

It’s hard to make players cower when the prophesied Dark Lord of Doom, the world-shaking, sinister wizard, shows up to blast them and thunders that as they die they should know they’ve been slain by him, he who is feared from one end of the Bloodshard Domains to the other, as the evil and mighty “Piccadilly.”

So, wanna be somebody? It’s work, but it’s not rocket science. You’ll need a cape and a sword—and you’ll need to show up. Ω

Ask the Kobold

Bleeding, Invisibility, Suggestion, and Lines of Effect

by Skip Williams

Not Bloody Likely...

Q: The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game includes a bleeding condition. Clerics with the Death domain can impose this condition with a melee touch attack—the bleeding touch ability. This seems like a powerful ability because it requires a Heal check or magical healing to stop. I'm thinking of allowing a Constitution check with a DC of 10 + spell level + attackers ability modifier as an immediate action check as an alternative way of healing. What do you think?

Assessing your proposal is a fairly complex task. Let's start by taking a look at bleeding touch.

Bleeding touch is a spell-like ability that a Death cleric can use several times a day (3 + Wisdom modifier). The ability doesn't exactly impose the bleeding condition because the bleeding will stop on its own: duration equals half the user's cleric level, rounded down, minimum 1 round, but applying the other rules for the bleeding condition is a good idea. A DC 15 Heal check or the application of any spell or effect that heals damage stops the bleeding. (This should include any ability or effect that restores hit points, including fast healing and regeneration.) The effect does not stack with other sources of bleeding.

The subject bleeds for 1d6 hp damage/round. The rules aren't completely clear about when the damage occurs, but I suggest the subject take damage when the user

delivers the touch and takes damage again during that same point each round until the effect ends. This could prove deadly in very short order for creatures with just a few HD but not terribly dangerous to more powerful creatures, especially if they have healing available. It's really not much of a threat to PCs because they usually have plenty of healing at hand. It can kill or help defeat unintelligent monsters, though, who generally have neither healing magic nor any Heal skill.

It's also not clear just what you're doing when making that Heal check to stop the bleeding; the DC is the same as the DC for a first aid check, so I suggest you require a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. (You're pretty much slapping on a bandage—probably a makeshift bandage—and binding up the bleeding wound.) I don't think there's any reason you could not perform this action on yourself, and I suggest that you allow a retry 1/round if the attempt fails.

As bleeding touch is written, a high-level Death Cleric can make several weaker creatures bleed to death each day, although it can take a while for most creatures to bleed out. It doesn't seem like a campaign buster. An ability check to end the effect seems a bit easy when compared to the skill check the rules specify, but it has the virtue of being available to everyone.

If you're determined to implement a change here (and I'm not

recommending it), I have this advice: making the check as an immediate action is problematical. Exactly when does the bleeding touch subject make the check? To keep bleeding touch from losing all effectiveness in your campaign, I recommend that you make it a swift action. That way, the subject takes at least 1d6 bleeding damage. I also recommend that you do not allow retries.

Now You See Me...

Q: Can you clear up a few issues with the *spiritual weapon* spell that the rules don't seem to cover? How does the spell interact with an invisible target? Let's say you send the weapon after a foe who subsequently becomes invisible. How does the weapon react? What if you try to use the spell against a target that's invisible already? What happens when the target (visible or not) moves? Is the *spiritual weapon* affected by concealment effects? How would the *spiritual weapon* interact with a *mirror image* spell?

When you cast a *spiritual weapon* spell, you designate a foe to attack. The newly created force weapon attacks that foe and continues attacking that foe, no matter where the foe goes until the spell ends, until you designate a new foe to attack (a move action for you), until the weapon goes out of your sight, or until the foe goes out of range. In the latter two cases, the weapon moves to your space and hovers there.

The spell description doesn't say what happens if you send the weapon at a foe and that foe

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Those Pesky Invisible Things

It's important to remember that invisible things can't be seen, but they can be heard and sometimes they leave visible traces, such as footprints in snow or dirt.

As a general rule, if an invisible creature is active and within 30 ft., you can make a DC 20 Perception check—a reactive one, which is not an action—to notice that there's something lurking somewhere within that radius. The rules don't define "active," but I think it's safe to assume a creature is active when it's doing something that can affect the game world in some way: moving, fighting, speaking, using a skill, picking up something, or undertaking some other significant activity. The type of activity the creature is undertaking can affect the Perception DC, as shown in the Special Abilities section of the appendices in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

If your Perception check succeeds, all you have is a hunch that there's something unseen lurking nearby. To actually locate the unseen creature, you must make an active Perception check (move action) with a DC of about 40 (base DC of 20 + 20 for trying to pinpoint + the modifier for the creature's activity). If you succeed, you know the space where the unseen creature is. If you attack that space before the creature moves away, you might hit it; your attack has a 50% miss chance for the target's total concealment.

becomes invisible; I recommend that the weapon attacks the space where you last saw the foe (unless you use a move action to make the weapon attack somewhere else). If the foe is no longer in that space, the attack misses. If the foe

is there, the weapon attacks with the standard 50% miss chance for attacking an unseen foe. You can send the weapon after a foe you cannot see at the time you cast the spell. If so, you must designate a space for the weapon to attack.

If there's nobody in that space, the attack misses. If something occupies the space, the weapon attacks with a miss chance.

A *spiritual weapon* won't give you any feedback on whether you've hit a foe you cannot see or not although, in some cases, you might be able to notice or deduce that there has been a hit (hearing a groan from the foe, for example). In any

case, you can use a move action each round to have the weapon attack a different space; you must be able to see the weapon at the space where it attacks, and the space must be within the spell's range.

As you might deduce from the foregoing, a *spiritual weapon* is subject to concealment. Use your position on the battlefield to determine if a *spiritual weapon* is subject to a miss chance from concealment and to determine how big the miss chance is.

Against a foe protected by *mirror image*, a *spiritual weapon* strikes at the foe, and you roll to see if it attacks an image or the real target, as noted in the *mirror image* spell description.

Tell Me What You Want...

Q: Does a *suggestion* spell leave any way to evade the effect? Once the subject fails the save, the spell works continuously and the subject seems to have little recourse. In a recent session, a PC gave an opponent (an active combatant in an encounter) a *suggestion* to "stand still and don't move!" I gave the enemy a new save whenever the party attacked or tried to attack, and the opponent finally made the save. This seems overpowered for a fairly low-level spell.

Once it affects a subject, a *suggestion* spell does not allow the subject a save to throw off the effects as some other enchantment spells do (such as *dominate person*). As with any lower-level enchantment spell, however, the *suggestion* spell places some pretty strict limits on what you can do with it.

A *suggestion* allows you to prompt the subject to follow some simple course of action that seems reasonable to the subject at the time you cast the spell. Standing still in the middle of the battle is a tad beyond reasonable. I suppose a *suggestion* to "hold your ground" might work in a battle, but the subject can do that just by staying in an area; the subject could otherwise fight on unhindered.

10'x10' Toon

by Stan!



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What's Line of Effect?

Nearly all spells require a clear line between the spell's caster and the spell's point of origin, and between the point of origin and any place where the spell's effects extend. Often, the caster and the point of origin are the same. Line of effect and line of sight are very similar; both are straight lines, traced from one grid intersection to another. It takes a solid barrier to block line of effect, whereas anything that obscures vision blocks line of sight. It's possible for a barrier to block one and not the other. For example, a pane of clear glass won't block line of sight (because you can see through it) but it will block line of effect (because it's solid).

A solid barrier with a hole of at least 1 sq. ft. through it does not block line of effect. In general, a barrier must be an object that fills a square on the battlefield or runs along the edge of a square. A creature generally does not block line of effect (because it will not completely fill a space).

To determine if line of effect is blocked, locate the point where the spell is cast, which must be an intersection on the grid; the point can be a grid intersection of any square the caster occupies. Most GMs that I know require you to pick a grid intersection along the outer edge of the space the caster occupies and trace a straight line to the place where the spell is aimed. This can be another grid intersection (in the case of an area spell) or a creature or object (in the case of a spell with a target). If the caster aims the spell at a target, trace a line of effect to any grid intersection in the space the target occupies.

If you cannot trace any line from the caster to the target or aiming point without passing through a solid barrier, line of effect is blocked. The spellcaster may try different combinations of casting points and aiming points to find an unbroken line of effect.

When tracing line of effect from a spell's point of origin to any place inside the spell's potential area, use the same process, but the spell's point of origin cannot change once chosen.

A *suggestion* spell also has a variable duration: 1 hour/level or until completed. Once the subject completes the action you've prompted, the spell ends. In the case of "hold your ground," that's probably 1 round of combat. Of course, you could set some end condition, such as "hold your ground until all the enemy is defeated." On the other hand, a subject following such a suggestion probably won't be too restricted when it comes to actions. The subject likely would remain in the general location where the spell was cast, neither retreating from it nor advancing out of it (but free to move around in it) until all the subject's foes fall in battle or retreat.


I Can See Dying People...

Q: The *deathwatch* spell allows you to sense the status of all nearby creatures. The spell description says emanation, so is it blocked

by a sheet of glass? Does it require line of sight? If it does, can a rogue hiding in the shadows stay undetected? This could be an extremely powerful spell depending on the interpretation.

A *deathwatch* spell creates a 30-ft.-cone emanation. As with any emanation spell, the effect continually radiates from the spell's point of origin (in this case, the spellcaster). The spell must have of line of effect (not line of sight) to any creature whose status it reveals; the emanation does not extend anywhere line of effect is blocked.

If you can see or touch a creature within the emanation, you know its status. If you cannot see or touch a creature, all you know is that creature's status. You don't know where it is. If several unseen, untouched creatures are within the emanation cone, you know each creature's status but not which status goes with which creature. Ω



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How to Create Feats

Getting off on the Right Foot

By Sigfried Trent



Feats are best described by what they are not: they are not spells, they are not class abilities, they are not skills, and they are not races. Good feats do one of three things: 1) they alter or build on a core feature of a class or race (such as casting a spell or attacking in melee), 2) they simulate some general action or talent (climbing ropes, sleeping lightly), or 3) they offer a bonus most characters can benefit from.

A well-defined feat has the following five traits:

- Grants a single benefit to the character that does not change based on level
- Does not duplicate any other game mechanic
- Does not invent a new game mechanic
- Does not grant a supernatural or spell-like ability
- Can only be taken once or grants a different benefit each time it is taken

Not every feat matches all these traits, but feats that violate these general rules are better modeled as spells, racial abilities, or class abilities.

Finding Inspiration

Most feats are inspired by a game mechanic or by trying to simulate some real or imagined trait, action, or gimmick. Both are a good place to start and each requires you do a little work to flesh out the other side. Mechanics-based feats need some roleplaying justification and simulation-based feats need a mechanical representation.

When starting with simulation-based feats, try to be flexible in how you represent it. A simple mechanic that approximates what you have in mind is usually better than a complicated but more realistic simulation—feats should be short write-ups, not entire game models. In other words, focus on the outcome rather than all the steps of an action.

Feat writing is 90% mechanics and 10% flavor, and the product must contain a golden nugget of fun. The best feats inspire great roleplaying when players and GMs describe its use.

What Should My Feat Do?

The *benefit* section of a feat describes what a feat does and how it does it. Follow three guiding principles as you work it up:

- Keep the mechanics as simple as possible
- Balance the benefit with the cost
- Make it available to the widest range of characters possible

This section should not be a flavor section; save that for the opening line or an italic nugget describing the effect.

KEEPING THINGS SIMPLE

Keeping your feat's mechanics simple has many benefits: it makes the feat easy to understand, it can avoid

bogging down game play, and it helps you to find balance issues. The rule that a feat should do only one thing is essential. If a feat grants multiple bonuses in multiple situations, you might confuse cost issues. Separate the effects into multiple feats, or consider using it as the foundation for a new class.

To simulate a fancy combat maneuver, focus on the result rather than all the steps needed to get there. If you are giving multiple benefits because each is too weak on its own, consider making them stronger and combining them into a multiple feat family or feat chain.

Avoid any mechanic that adds derived benefits. For example, a feat that raises a PC ability score requires many adjustments to skills, combat bonuses, and so forth; these bog down play and could have unforeseen impacts. Instead, apply a direct bonus to a given die roll or game action whenever possible. Also, avoid mechanics that add additional rolls in combat—each such feat slows down the whole game just a little.

Feats used during character creation or down time—such as item creation feats or Leadership—can be more complicated. After all, no one has to wait for you to work out the details during combat.

Using precise game terms and language is important for simplicity. Use only the number of words needed and no more. When you use an existing game term, it has a specific meaning, and phrases like “grant a bonus to” or “increase your bonus to” drastically change how the feat bonus stacks. Use existing core game feats as templates to keep your language precise and consistent.

THE BALANCING ACT

Balancing feats is something of an art. The best way to judge balance is to compare your feat to the game’s core feats. If your feat is clearly superior to a similar feat, it is likely too strong and will shift game balance. If it is clearly inferior, the feat will serve no purpose since few players choose weak feats.

Another key consideration is the strength of a benefit vs. the frequency you can use it. A +4 to hit on all attacks would be badly overpowered, but a +4 to attacks you receive rarely is fine. Remember that good players will seek to create opportunities to use strong benefits and create combos.

PREREQUISITES

The benefit of a feat and its cost must be roughly equal. Every feat has an opportunity cost of not selecting some other feat. But for an especially strong feat, you must include greater costs using the *prerequisites* section.

One of the most common costs is to require prerequisite feats. The most common mistake to avoid is selecting prerequisite feats with obvious beneficial combos—this negates their value as a cost. The most common costs require ability scores or skill ranks. Both can work well unless they are highly synergistic with the feat mechanic—in those cases, the character would be taking them anyway. As a matter of custom, ability score prerequisites are always odd values greater than 11, to give odd numbered ability scores some game value.

Base attack bonus, spellcasting level, and to a lesser degree, skill ranks are all used to limit feats to a given level

of character. This isn’t exactly a cost, but some powers that are balanced at higher levels are effectively unbalanced at lower levels. These elements keep strong combat bonuses away from non-combat characters or strong casting feats away from splash casters.

Feat Elements to Consider with Suspicion

Be wary of bonus stacking issues at all times. Keep in mind what bonus types stack and what types don’t, and think twice before offering stacking or un-typed bonuses. Read up on the standard bonus types and avoid creating new ones.

Avoid multiplicative bonuses, such as those that double or triple damage, duration, or other effects. While the stacking rules help mitigate these, these elements are ripe for exploitation by clever players.

Avoid rewarding low ability scores or the lack of some character trait. This can create some very unbalancing min-maxing situations.

Hitting a Wide Target Audience

A feat is no good if no one uses it. To maximize the game value of a feat, you want to make it available to a wide audience. All too often,

Why Is Open Design Launching Advanced Feats?

Feats remain one of the most dynamic ways of customizing a character, and I’ve been a huge fan since they were first introduced. Along with the OGL, feats prompted me to seek out and join the Netbook of Feats (NBOF), and I quickly become its editor.

The NBOF had a mission to create the largest and highest quality collection of feats anywhere. Authors sent us submissions, and volunteers meticulously reviewed each one. No feat was published unless both reviewers and authors were satisfied. The staff and I learned a great deal about the art of writing and editing feats over the years. When Open Design asked me to create some new feats and update the best of our collection for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, I jumped at the chance.

Our primary mission at NBOF was to help fans of the game create and publish professional quality game content. In that spirit, I bring you the sum of our wisdom and experience over 5 years of doing nothing but feats. I’m certainly looking forward to sharing my work and that of other NBOF authors in the Advanced Feats series featuring feats for use with the new classes in the *Pathfinder Advanced Players Guide*.

-Sig Trent



Example: Creating a Feat

ELVEN BOW

Prerequisite: Elf or half-elf, Dex 16, base attack bonus +4

Benefit: Due to your training as an elf child, when using a bow, you add your Dexterity bonus to your damage rolls. You can also string your bow as a free action or use your bow as if it were a quarter staff.

So, what's wrong with this feat?

- The name refers to an object rather than a talent.
- It is needlessly limited to elves when many races use bows well.
- The Dexterity requirement is not serving as a cost since the feat takes advantage of high Dex.
- The Dexterity requirement is an even number when it should be odd.
- It mentions childhood training but requires an advanced base attack bonus.
- There is flavor text in the benefits section.
- It has three separate benefits when it should only have one.
- One of the benefits refers to an action which has no game mechanic governing it: stringing a bow.
- The wording is not precise and does not use proper game terms.
- The damage bonus is potentially large and has no limitations, making it over-powered.

Six Ways to Fix It.

- For starters, we pick one benefit to focus on: the Dexterity bonus to damage is exciting and desirable for ranged-

attack characters, so let's go with that.

- Next, we open this feat up to more than just elves and include crossbows: this feat inflicts its extra damage from accuracy, so let's call it Pinpoint Shot.
- We make this a combat feat, so it is available as a bonus feat pick for martial classes.
- The feat is overpowered (every archer would always take it), so we need to cut down on the power level significantly. To start, let's limit it to ranged attacks within 30 ft. of the target, which matches our accuracy theme. This is a common mechanic to limit ranged combat bonuses, and it suggests Point Blank Shot as a prerequisite to help cost the feat.
- To help limit stacking, we specify this damage bonus does not stack with similar ability-based damage bonuses.
- We drop the Dexterity requirement since it serves no purpose.
- Finally, we clean up and standardize the game rules language.

PINPOINT SHOT

Prerequisite: Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +4

Benefit: You gain a damage bonus equal to your Dexterity modifier when attacking with a bow or crossbow at ranges up to 30 ft. This bonus does not stack with any other ability modifier to damage such as the Strength bonus granted when using a composite bow.

authors create a feat themed on a given race or class but with a very generic bonus. From a design perspective, it is far better to make the feat available to any character and let the player rationalize why their character has it.

Even a feat based on a class ability should be tied to the ability and not the class itself. This increases flexibility; if another class has that

ability, they may benefit from the related feat as well.

Finishing Touches

Every feat needs a name. Yours should be short, descriptive, and self-explanatory. It can be tempting to make a play on words or add setting flavor to the feat name, but this won't help players find and

make use of it. The best feat names include a mechanics key word to let readers identify the feat's purpose. Subtle Sneak Attack tells readers this feat is good for a rogue or assassin; the same feat named Pie in the Sky tells you nothing about what it might do.

Provide a one-sentence description of what it does to provide context. Writing this summation can help you narrow down your feat's focus if it is a bit too complicated. Some feats also include a line of descriptive or flavor text to help you understand the intent. They aren't required, but when done well, these elements can help spark a player's imagination.

Sometimes you need to assign a feat type. The default type is general; no special rules apply beyond what is listed in its *benefit* section. The Combat feat type indicates it is appropriate as a fighter bonus feat. All other feat types include special rules that govern how the feat is taken and how it operates. Avoid making new feat types unless you are creating at least a dozen of them along with their related mechanics.

The *example* and *normal* sections are optional for any feat and help clarify how it works. *Normal* highlights the underlying rules the feat is based on, while an example helps illustrate the mechanics of a potentially ambiguous or complicated feat.

Reviewing and Testing Your Feat

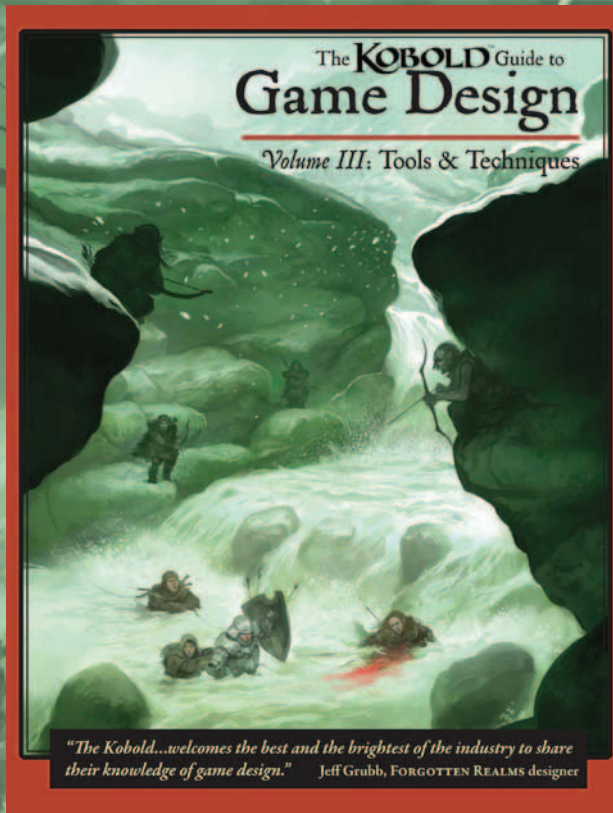
Like any game design, your first draft can probably be improved. Ask others for their opinions or—better yet—playtest the feat to improve the quality of your work.

The Next Step Forward

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game has a long and bright future, and now is a great time to jump in and start creating feats. Following a few simple principles, you can help make the game more enjoyable for others and create clean and balanced feats for all. Ω

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Ancient Tongues

Fantasy Languages for a Fantasy World

By Michael Kortez

Most languages in fantasy roleplaying games simply increase the number of cultures or monsters that you can communicate with, which is certainly fine as far as it goes. But it doesn't have to end there; language has much more potential to improve your game.

While language is a mode of communication, it also helps establish the mental framework we use to perceive and analyze the world. In a fantasy world, a truly exotic language should provide a truly fantastical framework—a framework that opens the door for PCs to relate and respond to the world in fresh new ways.

These eight languages are sufficiently exotic or magical in their origins that, just by learning them, you receive associated in-game benefits. This reinforces that you have mastered something truly ancient and special. Each language costs double, or the equivalent of two standard languages. Within the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* rules, each of these languages requires you to either devote two of your starting bonus languages to them or invest two ranks into the Linguistics skill.

Enochian

The first of the first human tongues, Enochian is the language that celestial angels gave to humans. Now lost to humankind, it contains many words that replicate the linguistic building blocks of an angel's

truespeech ability. As such, the reassuring sounds of those with the truespeech ability ring with even greater clarity in the ears of those who can comprehend Enochian.

Few texts still contain Enochian, the *Liber Loagaeth* being one of the most notable. Scholars have never been able to truly translate the entire language, so the study of Enochian is a process of continual discovery.

Benefit: Normally, creatures with the angel subtype can extend their protective aura up to 20 ft. to aid mortals. However, if you speak Enochian, you can gain the benefit from an angel's aura even up to 40 ft. away. In addition, you gain a deeper insight into the transient nature of your mortality and the primacy of the soul. You may choose to substitute Charisma or Wisdom for Constitution when determining your maximum negative hp total before dying.

Jie

Jie is a language of contemplation formed from an ancient dialogue between mankind's first philosophers and the wingless dragons of the east. It speaks of abstract concepts and deeds that are, to the uninitiated, incoherent or at least unattainable in the mortal world. Although not spoken aloud for thousands of years, one can still find Jie in

written form in the treasured texts and scrolls of forgotten monasteries, scripted in its perfectly distilled and innately beautiful characters.

The act of reading Jie characters and reflecting upon them has a purifying effect on the mind. Those who have mastered Jie carry themselves with a natural sense of calm, typically perceptible only to others who have studied the language.

Benefit: If you are fluent in Jie and spend a 1/2 hour or more reading from a page with Jie characters, you recover a single point of expended ki, 1/day.

Rue-Thothka

Rue-Thothka is a bestial root language that gave rise to several of the more brutish tongues of the known world, including Orcish and Minotaur. Even today, many of Rue-Thothka's words still find use in popular curses, though few who hear them understand their true meaning. Instead, most know only that they find the words intrinsically disquieting.

Buried deep within many humanoid creatures is a racial memory taught to their ancestors; bred in the bone, this memory makes listeners fear those who speak the words of Rue-Thothka. A linguist who can properly enunciate authentic Rue-Thothka knows how to tap the raw brutality of this menacing tongue.

Benefit: If you study Rue-Thothka, you may choose to sprinkle in these malignant phrases any time you

attempt to demoralize dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, halflings, or humans using the Intimidate skill. If your opponent is shaken, he suffers a -3 penalty instead of the usual -2 penalty. This increased penalty lasts for a single round, regardless of how long the target is demoralized by the skill check.

Sword-Tongue

The language of strikes and parries, sword-tongue is the secret speech of intelligent magical blades. Rather than using the sounds of words, the phonetics of sword-tongue derives from the physical movements of a weapon. Much of the language's vocabulary is devoted to the art of fencing and the anatomical vulnerabilities of living creatures. Mastery of sword-tongue provides significant insight into the secret world of intelligent magic weapons.

Benefit: If you speak Sword-Tongue, you gain +1 on Will saves to resist a magic item's domination attempt during a personality conflict. In addition, you learn to decrypt many subtle secrets of swordplay over time: you can grant a single slashing or piercing weapon that you wield the *keen* weapon property for a single attack, 1/day, as long as you act on a higher initiative count than your opponent.

Sy'siv'sy (and Siv'sy'siv)

Sy'siv'sy is a near-forgotten language of the first creatures of the sky. A linguist who masters the complex whispered staccato of Sy'siv'sy learns to appreciate just how primitive the common tongue is when it comes to expressing words that communicate movement and relative position. For example, Sy'siv'sy has a single word which means "behind you at 5:00 o'clock and 45 degrees up." As a result, one who is fluent in Sy'siv'sy learns to react faster and more fluidly when thinking about movement in a three-dimensional world.

The language actually has two names since it contains two separate

vocabularies. The second one, Siv'sy'siv, is used when the speaker is at a lower elevation than its audience.

Sy'siv'sy is no longer a written language. Scholars believe there was once a means to inscribe Sy'siv'sy characters upon air currents and send them as a message, but if so, this ability has been lost to time.

Benefit: If you study Sy'siv'sy, you may re-roll a single Fly check 1/day, taking the preferred result.

Tovran

Tovran is the language in which humankind shared its first epic poems. Its intonation and phrasing uplifts and inspires in ways now lost to modern language. Once the exclusive domain of Viking heroes, Tovran is now a cherished secret of elite bards and battlefield commanders. Those who hear Tovran echoing in its proper phraseology often find themselves sensing the watchful gaze of a favored ancestor or otherwise sensing that a significant moment in their lives is suddenly upon them.

A purely oral tradition, Tovran does not exist in written form.

Benefit: If you speak Tovran, you may extend the effects of either your inspire courage or inspire competence bardic performances 1/day. The effects of your abilities also linger, lasting an additional round after your bardic performance ends to maintain it. For allies who can also speak and, understand the inspiring words of Tovran, the lingering lasts 2 extra rounds.

Speaking Tovran does not enable you to have more than one bardic performance in effect at one time.

Vos'ghaen

True students of glyphs and wards know that most of the ancient arcane symbols in use today were once words from the dead language of Vos'ghaen. Those who cast

magical glyphs and understand the symbols' true meaning in context achieve a proficiency with magic wards that eludes other spellcasters.

The written structure of Vos'ghaen is truly remarkable. All communication is a single character in length. Rather than a series of symbols following one another, the drafter grafts each new word or idea onto the first word, creating an increasingly complex character. An elaborate and complex Vos'ghaen glyph can convey an entire lesson or historic tale in a single sigil – and can require an entire page to display in its sinuous, overlapping curves.

Benefit: If you are fluent in Vos'ghaen and cast a *glyph of warding*, *greater glyph of warding*, or *fire trap*, you may re-roll all 1's on the damage dice once the spell is triggered. In addition, you receive a +1 language bonus to all Perception checks to spot traps left by others involving those same spells.

Whisperium

Whisperium is a mysterious sub-vocal language that relies on tongue and facial movement instead of phonetic sound. Although rare, it is still used by those who trade in stealth, such as elite military units and assassin cults. Anyone capable of interpreting Whisperium can automatically understand someone speaking Whisperium without having to resort to the Linguistics check normally required for lip reading. Unknown to many arcanists, most spells which lack verbal components actually contain Whisperium syntax.

Though very rare, Whisperium texts consist entirely of pictures of faces. More commonly, Whisperium messages are subtly sculpted on the faces of ancient busts and statues or even golems.

Benefit: If you know Whisperium and possess the Silent Spell metamagic feat, you may prepare or spontaneously cast a silenced spell without the normal corresponding level adjustment, 1/day. Ω



Courtly Games

of the Wizard Prince

By Mario Podeschi

Art by Hubert Ludwig and Andreas Praefcke

Let the games begin!

—Prince Victor, Archmage (invoking the 233rd annual Wizard Games)

There is no shortage of kingdoms where wizards reign supreme, casting wizards in a different light than the archetypal tower-dwelling recluse. These blue-blooded spellcasters lead powerful dynasties or noble houses and engage in the same power struggles as traditional aristocrats.

And along with that comes intrigue. What better way to trade in secrets and hone one's talents than at an annual festival of wizardly games? On their own, these games provide a fantastic and innocent diversion for interested characters to participate in. Alternately, they can be combined with other plotlines: perhaps the PCs need to stop an assassination attempt or win an essential magic item.

Whether as a stand-alone adventure or a backdrop to something more, the prince's Wizard Games promises to add an engaging flourish to any high-magic setting.

Basilisk Baiting

Gladiators armed with mirrored shields must lure basilisks into self-petrification before falling victim themselves.

RULES

A single gladiator begins in the center of an arena with any equipment desired, though she must carry a mirrored shield. A basilisk is then released into the arena, and initiative is rolled as normal.

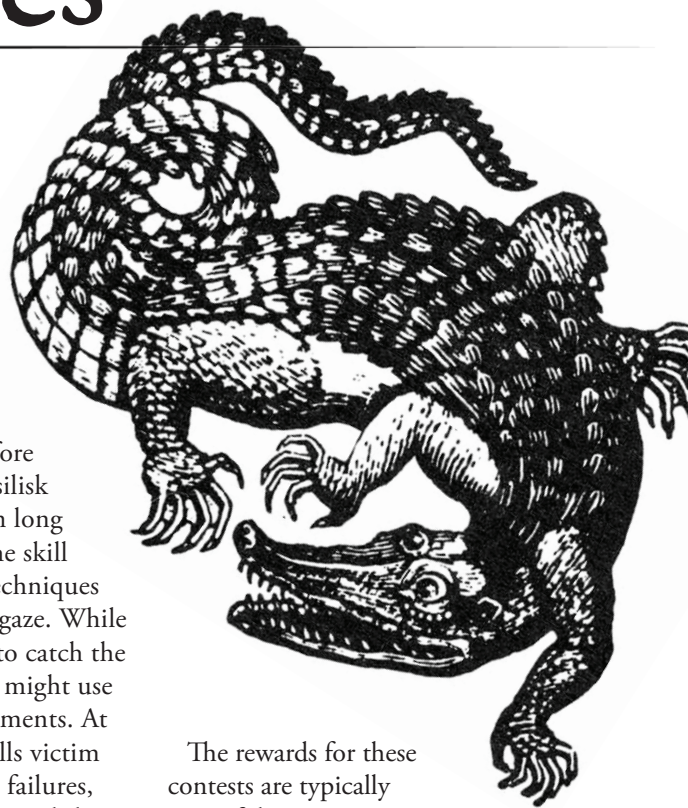
The gladiator then engages in a simple skill challenge—4 successes before 3 failures—to trick the basilisk into staring at its reflection long enough to petrify itself. The skill checks represent various techniques used to twist the basilisk's gaze. While a rogue might use Stealth to catch the creature off-guard, a cleric might use Insight to predict its movements. At 4 successes, the creature falls victim to its reflected power. At 3 failures, the mirror has been broken and the game is lost. DCs vary according to the personality of the beast—slower basilisks might be vulnerable to Acrobatics while clever ones might be less vulnerable to Stealth.

The basilisk is an aggressive monster. While the gladiator uses her standard actions for the various skill checks, the basilisk fights normally, trying to petrify or otherwise disable its opponent. Simply gutting or blasting the animal is considered poor form.

CONVENTIONS

Few gladiators die in basilisk baiting but they often become petrified. Judges keep *sleep* spells at the ready to stop the monster if a life is at risk.

Basilisk baiting is often played as a tournament with successively more difficult arenas and basilisks for each tier. Late in the tournament, a gladiator might even have to bait multiple creatures at the same time.



The rewards for these contests are typically powerful magic items since participants must be skilled warriors to withstand such creatures.

Glamers

Competing spellcasters take turns weaving a story of illusions in this game of subtle one-upmanship.

RULES

A coin toss determines the first contestant. On each turn, he or she can either create a new illusion or alter an illusion already in play, making skill checks to determine each illusion's strength. These rolls are chosen by the contestant: Arcana to measure technical skill, Streetwise to give the audience what they want, and so on.

A panel of three judges determines victory. Any of the judges can lift a ceremonial orb to signal the end of a contest, at which point the judges confer to decide the winner. A combination of arcane skill, depth of detail, and wit determines victory.

A Game of Glamers

SPYRATYRA: There is a forest.

VICTOR: A starving woman walks into the forest.

SPYRATYRA: A flock of crows watches hungrily.

VICTOR: So does a wolf.

SPYRATYRA: The woman falls down.

VICTOR: The woman dies.

SPYRATYRA: The crows feast.

VICTOR: The wolf barks at them.

SPYRATYRA: (realizing she has erred) The crows fly away.

VICTOR: The wolf drags away the dead woman.

SPYRATYRA: Another wolf appears.

VICTOR: They are mates. (wins)

CONVENTIONS

Subtlety is key in a game of glamers. If one player has created a tree, it is a better move to create a caterpillar to chew on its leaves than to create a dragon to burn it to the ground.

It is bad form to ignore an opponent's plays. If one player has created a forest, it is a superior move to craft forest animals than cactuses. Conversely, twisting an opponent's illusion to work against them is a sign of great skill.

Most games settle on a theme—such as life versus death or good versus evil. Particularly effective themes are often cited in philosophical discussion and can even convince wizard rulers to change their minds about key issues of state.

There is no shame in losing a game of glamers. Indeed, the best games are a testament to the skill of both illusionists since the illusory battles combine the work of two agile minds.

Shoves

Teams of three use control magic to push, pull, and slide an adamantine ball into the opposing goal.

RULES

Shoves is played to 3 points with 5-minute rests between each. A referee begins each round with a magical explosion, determining

initiative normally. The opposing teams then use their various powers to shove an adamantine ball into the other team's goal. The field is 150 ft. long and divided into three columns, each 15 ft. wide. Players must remain within a single column although, after each point, they may move to a new column.

If players leave their designated columns illegally, the other team is entitled to a penalty shot. In this case, the ball is placed 10 ft. from the opposing goal, and the fouled team chooses one of their side guards to face off against the opposing side. Initiative is rolled, and the two players each get a single shot on the ball. If no point is scored, play restarts as it would at the start of a round.

Shoves is a rough game. Players are always caught in a variety of magical spells, and few finish a game without a few bruises. However, rules against unnecessary roughness mean that bloodying a member of the other team gives them a penalty shot as described above. Dropping an opponent to 0 hp results in immediate disqualification.

If the ball is destroyed, play restarts. The ball must be intact to score a point.

CONVENTIONS

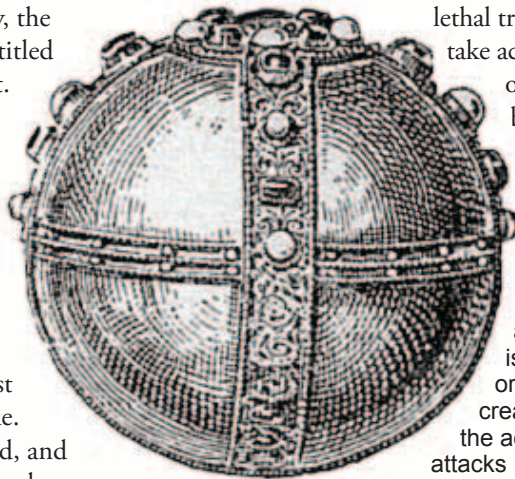
Few games are as popular as shoves. Fast-paced, brutal, yet ultimately tactical, it attracts peasant and scholar alike.

Every fan enjoys the game differently. Some flock to the violence, using their cheers to goad competitors into bloodying one another. Others obsess over the nuances of individual teams, often gambling large sums of money on their favorites.

A universal crowd pleaser is when the ball gets shoveled (or destroyed).

Though the ball is highly resistant to damage, it still suffers some wear and tear. The most legendary of shovers have even been known to strategically shovel a ball, dropping a highly damaging spell just before a point is scored.

ADAMANTINE BALL (Level 6 Elite Warder)



The adamantine ball is a non-lethal trap that does not take actions. In a game of shoves, it is battered around by players' attacks, bowling over rival competitors. **Trigger** When the adamantine ball is slid, pushed, or pulled into a creature's square, the adamantine ball attacks

Attack

No action

Melee 0

Target Creature occupying square

Attack As the attack roll of the creature sliding, pushing, or pulling the adamantine ball

Hit Target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. The adamantine ball continues as directed by the controller, possibly hitting the same or other creatures.

Miss The adamantine ball stops moving

COMBAT STATISTICS

The adamantine ball is a Small inanimate construct: AC 20, Fort 18, Ref 18; hp 50; resist 10 all. It can be subjected to status effects like any other creature, but a few conditions create unique results:

Grabbed, restrained, or immobilized—The adamantine ball cannot be pushed, pulled, or slid

Slow—The adamantine ball reduces all push, pull, and slide effects by 2

Prone—The adamantine ball cannot be knocked prone

Mad Duke's Bluff

This daylong mystery tests the perceptiveness and critical thinking of the wizard court.

Mad Duke's Bluff

This year's game of mad duke's bluff has all the wizards stumped, but the PCs can use their skills to assemble enough clues to figure out who the traitor is. Doing so may not win them any prizes, but it will certainly win the respect of the court. This particular game has three male suspects—Argentum, Gnosis, and Percival—and three female suspects—Coral, Spyratyra, and Sonia. (These names are just placeholders and can easily be replaced with NPCs significant to the campaign.)

(Easy Streetwise) Earlier that day, there was a dance where all the men lift their orbs to all the women. Percival and Spyratyra were conspicuously absent from this event. When asked, they lifted their orbs to one another while blushing.

(Easy Insight) Percival tells you that his sister Sonia did not greet him, but he was lying. Was this to protect himself, or to protect her?

(Easy Diplomacy) Gnosis demonstrates how he cannot possibly be it, and how Percival never greeted him.

(Moderate Perception) Both Argentum and Gnosis greeted Sonia, who is by far the most attractive wizard at the games.

(Moderate Streetwise) Argentum and Coral did not speak once during the entire festival.

(Easy Perception) Spyratyra, who is a hopeless flirt, greeted both Argentum and Gnosis.

(Hard Insight) Coral despises Spyratyra, and lies to everyone by saying that Spyratyra greeted her.

FOR THE ANSWER TO THE MAD DUKE'S BLUFF, SEE PAGE XX.

RULES

During the games, wizards greet each other by lifting an orb with their right hands. Not only does this tradition encourage respect among rivals, it also fuels a peculiar mystery game called mad duke's bluff.

At the beginning of the games, a special ritual selects one random wizard to receive a special enchantment that marks him or her as the "traitor." The traitor immediately knows what is happening since a swirling blackness appears in his or her orb—unseen to everyone else. When greeting another wizard, the traitor can choose to "infect" that wizard (as a free action). Those infected receive the same swirling blackness that only the traitor can see. The traitor must infect five people by the end of the day or forfeit the game.

An hour before midnight, the wizards all lift their orbs, at which point the blackness becomes visible to all. This blackness marks the traitor and the five infected wizards as suspects, only one of whom can be accused. The rest of the court has 1 hour to deduce who among the six suspects is the traitor. At midnight, the wizards cast their votes, and the traitor is revealed.

CONVENTIONS

The day after mad duke's bluff, the accused wizard becomes the subject of a public illusory satire. It is not uncommon for a vengeful wizard to manipulate the investigation to humiliate a rival.

The winner of the previous year's game of glamers usually performs the satire.

Avoiding capture, the traitor receives a special prize for cunning.

This game references an ancient tale, when a royal heir was poisoned and six wizards were under investigation for the crime. It took only 1 hour for one of the infected, the mad Duke Martan, to identify the subject, and he did so using a dazzling display of logic and critical thinking. In tribute to the duke's success and as an exercise in keeping their minds sharp, the royal court recreates the mystery every year at the Wizard Games. It is considered a sign of mental strength when the court consistently identifies the traitor year after year.

Even wizards who ordinarily prefer staves and wands will purchase a decorative "festival orb" so that they can participate. Ω



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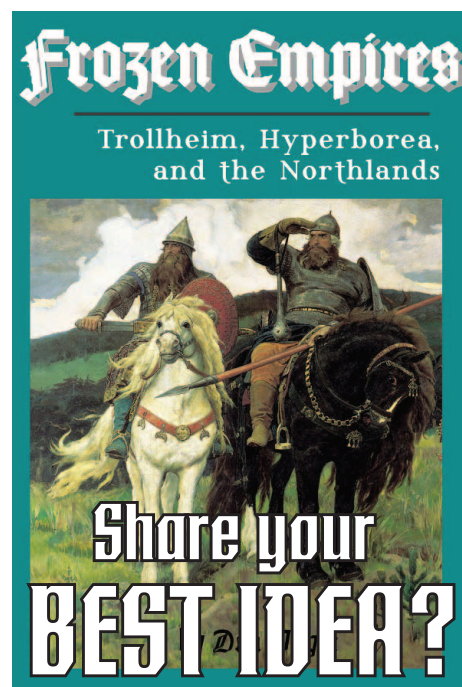
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Moral Choices That Matter

Crafting Serious Dilemmas for Your DRAGON AGE *Campaign*

By Jeff Tidball
Art by Andrew Bosley



It's chaos. Slaving raiders have attacked a village festival at the height of the revelry, and it's a bloodbath. Dispatching the enemy before you, you turn to take in the rest of the battle and see where your help is most needed.

A dozen yards away, two children huddle underneath a wagon, screaming in terror. Two raiders crouch down, grasping after the pair of them, unable to squeeze under the wagon themselves.

You take a running step toward the wagon, but you see one of the children—the boy—bravely push his sister out from underneath it on the side away from the raiders, shouting for her to run. Seeing what's happened, one of the two raiders stands and rounds the vehicle to chase her down. It's clear that he'll easily do it.

The other raider snakes a fist underneath

the wagon, manages to get a firm hold on the boy's tunic, and begins to yank him out.

You can save the boy, or you can save the girl.

What will you do?

I came on board with Green Ronin to help develop the *Dragon Age* RPG just as Chris Pramas and the rest of the crew were putting Set 1 to bed. My first project was to develop the adventure anthology *Blood in Ferelden*. When I started working on that project, Chris impressed on me one of the central tenets of *Dragon Age*. *Dragon Age*, Chris said, was about moral choices that matter.

In the months of my involvement with *Blood in Ferelden*, I had a lot of fun working with its authors, developing their adventures and testing those scenarios with my own playtest group. We all got a lot of exposure to

Dragon Age's moral choices. This article is about how to pose the same kinds of tough moral choices for the players in your own *Dragon Age* campaign, to make your adventures positively gripping. While it's drawn from my experience developing for *Dragon Age* and uses a few specific examples from its world of Thedas, the ideas are equally useful in any RPG.

Let's unpack the idea of "moral choices that matter."

To talk about moral choices that matter, it must first and foremost be clear that real choices present honest options. As the GM, you must be willing to roll with whatever the players choose, taking the story in

whatever directions their decisions dictate. Without that, the moral “choices” you place before them and their heroes will ring false, and their impact will be negligible.

Additionally, all options must be either tempting or repugnant. A choice between one great option and one terrible option—or even between one neutral and one somewhat unpleasant option—is no choice at all. When making the attractive moral choice has no downside, free will may have technically existed, but for dramatic purposes, it might as well not have.

Comic book writer and editor Mark Waid wrote insightfully about false choices at the Kung Fu Monkey blog last year. He artfully reduced the idea of a choice that’s really no choice at all to the pleasantly absurd scenario, “Will he choose the sandwich—or his *mother’s life?*”

A choice without an ethical dimension is less interesting than a choice that requires taking into account the core beliefs of the one who must choose. Ideally, the dilemma requires taking into account more than one of those core beliefs and pits them against each other.

Asking a hero to choose between a magic sword and a magic axe isn’t remotely interesting because it has no moral dimension. At the very best, you might manage to wring a half-moment of aesthetic interest from a “dilemma” like that. By the same token, asking a hero to choose between slaying this hurlock or that one is a tactical choice, not a moral choice. The hero’s competing moral impulses aren’t being pitted against each other. Even assuming a hero morally opposed to lethal force (and what’s that guy doing in your *Dragon Age* campaign?), the options under consideration are equivalent.

Asking a hero to choose between saving the life of a blameless non-player character (NPC) on one hand versus slaying a marauding creature

of darkness on the other begins to become interesting, because it starts to be a moral choice. Now the hero must choose between competing moral impulses. Is it more important to preserve and protect, or is it more important to police and punish? And, even if the best abstract decision between protection and punishment is clear, is one of these specific choices a more effective expression of its underlying motive than the other? And if so, does *that* tip the decision?

If the concept of defining moral choices based on competing core beliefs seems too abstract, this definition works, too: an effective moral choice is one that doesn’t have a “right” answer. They’re the timeliness questions that will never be solved by any individual or society. Love versus loyalty. Ambition versus compassion. Personal expression versus the expectations of society. Stock your campaign with these issues and you can’t go wrong.

Posing moral choices is only the first half of the challenge. The moral choices must also *matter*. Moral choices without real repercussions are mental masturbation. In your game, whatever the heroes choose in response to some moral dilemma, make sure there are consequences for them, or for the world, or—ideally—for both.

Repercussions and consequences have many dimensions.

The most difficult repercussions to quantify and understand are the emotional effects on PC heroes. Because tabletop RPGs lack the direct window to their characters’ internal monologues of other mediums, such as novels, it’s hard to show in an RPG how even a lifetime of moral choices change a PC. It’s not impossible to express, but it’s difficult. And expression is only half the battle—it’s also difficult to *observe* a PC’s emotional growth over time.

Concrete, external repercussions in

the real world of the heroes are thus highly desirable. Decisions about life and death are the most obvious. If important NPCs—or even player characters!—live or die because of the heroes’ moral choices, then it’s easy to see how the players gain or lose the tangible gameplay benefits of the characters they either saved or chose not to save. Sacrificing the caravan guards to preserve the princess may well have been the better decision, but now the PCs are stuck in enemy territory with a dearth of sword-arms.

Of course, emotional repercussions and concrete repercussions aren’t exclusive. If the PCs are stuck without the caravan guards’ aid in combat and if they *also* feel conflicted about the choice that led them there, you’re performing near 100% efficiency.

On the subject of concrete repercussions, the ones that have an impact “on-stage”—that is, where the players have to cope with them directly—are preferable to those whose aftershocks play out “off-stage,” where the heroes also avoid their direct effects. When the village is on fire, choosing whether to put out the mayor’s house or the blacksmith’s shop is less interesting if the heroes will be riding out of town in the morning. Off-stage aftermath isn’t without merit, but it’s best as part of a tapestry of consequences.

It’s Roleplaying 101 to appreciate the distinction between the ethos of the PCs and the ethos of the players. An interesting feature of that dichotomy is that it’s possible for the angst of making a moral decision to arise both from the players’ moral grounding *as well as* the PCs’ moral grounding:

- **Moral choices are most likely to affect a character in a *tangible way*.** The repercussions of a decision might bring danger to the hero, or restrict his liberty, or have a mechanical game effect.
- **On the other hand, moral choices are most likely to affect a *player* in an *emotional***

way. The repercussions of a decision might make a player feel uncomfortable, or icky, or powerful. They might lead a player to interesting thoughts on the way home from the game session, or interesting discussions with other players. They might also lead to undesirable social interactions, like quitting the gaming group or hurting friendships.

- **When moral choices affect a character in an emotional way, it's almost always because the player is roleplaying effectively.** This is desirable, of course, but as discussed above, it's difficult in the roleplaying form, both to elicit and to express. Sometimes when a player feels an emotional reaction to a moral choice, the other players can see his reaction bleed over and become the character's emotional reaction. The bleed-over may not be appropriate, depending on the extent to which the created character has the same moral beliefs as the player. This is advanced stuff, the Senior Seminar of the roleplaying degree program. Tread with caution.

(Of course, the fourth quadrant of this table of possibilities is a non-starter. If a moral choice in a game affects a *player* in a *tangible* way, something has gone horribly wrong.)

It's often interesting to present moral choices in the *Dragon Age* RPG that are compelling because of the differences between the contemporary mindset and the fantasy/medieval mindset. Modern ideas about social, economic, and gender equality are vastly different than they are in the Thedas.

But even though this juxtaposition can be interesting, these moral choices are the most likely to backfire and create real emotional dissonance among players. Some players like to imagine their characters doing things that are reasonable in the setting but repugnant in the modern day while others prefer to avoid this.

Those different types of players can obviously wind up at odds.

Don't overlook interesting moral choices grounded in the physical (as opposed to social) differences between the real world and the fantasy world, like those related to the existence or use of magic or the relationships between different fantasy races. But keep in mind that these fantastic moral choices usually have obvious analogs in the real world.

For instance, magic is a lot like technology, so if you suggest that wizards are a privileged class *and rightly so*, be prepared for others to interpret that as the equivalent of a contemporary argument for the superiority of computer programmers, electrical engineers, or Silicon Valley venture capitalists. Similarly, some players may interpret your moral dilemma about the relative worth of the various types of darkspawn as a commentary on how some real world racial or ethnic group is, was, or ought to be treated. Some players can be counted on to do so whether it's warranted or not and whether it's fun or not. Be warned.

Of course, *Dragon Age* wades fearlessly into these realms of comparative morality. In Thedas, for example, elves are an oppressed social class, forced to live in disease-ridden ghettos. Magic-users who aren't part of the designated political order are hunted down and killed for their capabilities. If such comparisons between real-world morality and fantasy-world morality make you uneasy, you might be better served by a less serious backdrop.

As a final point, keep in mind that moral choices don't have to be grandiose to be effective. Each one needn't serve as the centerpiece of a whole scenario or spell the difference between life and death. Present your players with meaningful ethical dilemmas at all levels of play, as important components of your campaign and adventures, yes, but

also in individual encounters and individual interactions.

The moral quandary posed in the vignette at the beginning of this article is a great example. The question of whether to save the brother or sister—and in so doing, doom the other—wasn't the central question of an entire adventure. Rather, it was a small moment in a larger battle that one of the players in my *Dragon Age* playtest group faced in playtesting Walt Ciechanowski's adventure "Amber Rage," one of the three adventures in *Blood in Ferelden*. Just one moment, with an interesting moral choice, among many others.

Hopefully, I've made the case for the moral choice that matters as a superior tool in your toolbox. If nothing else, I urge you to take small steps to introduce these dilemmas—at any scale—into your own adventures.

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Jeff Tidball is a writer and game designer whose credits run the gamut from roleplaying to board gaming, *ARS MAGICA* to *HORUS HERESY*. You can follow him on Twitter (@jefftidball) or visit his website at jefftidball.com. Ω



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The Reign of Men

Wicked Fantasy: Humans

By John Wick and Jesse Heinig
Art by Joe Slucher

And this is the Reign of Men. When all are king. Not subject to any gods or tyrants, humans choose their own destinies. Free to wreck or ruin our own lives or to lift ourselves up from the muck and sing songs that no voice has ever sung.

And this is the Reign of Men. We are free. And so shall we always be.

Humans have always been here. They are the Old Race. Newcomers—such as the elves, haffuns, and uvandir—bring with them their strange ways and gods, but humans and their Kingdom have always been here. From the first fires of creation to the moment when the heat of those flames die, humans will be here. First to step from the fire, last to walk into the darkness.

The word “kingdom” is accurate, and yet, misleading: a term the New Races use when speaking of humanity. While humans do have a king, their own word best translates as “reign” or “rule.” Not the Kingdom, but the Reign of Men.

Established by a line of warlords in the earliest days, the Reign of Men has transformed itself many times—once a tyranny, now something very different. Centuries ago, the Kingdom of Men suffered a plague of philosophers, all asking questions of liberty and social duty. The movement transformed the Kingdom and inspired a young and newly crowned king—Mantias Colevale—to change the way humans were ruled. Some called him “the Philosopher-King,” and others ridiculed him as “the King of Mans.” But the laws Colevale passed forever changed the direction of the Kingdom, creating something the world had never seen before.

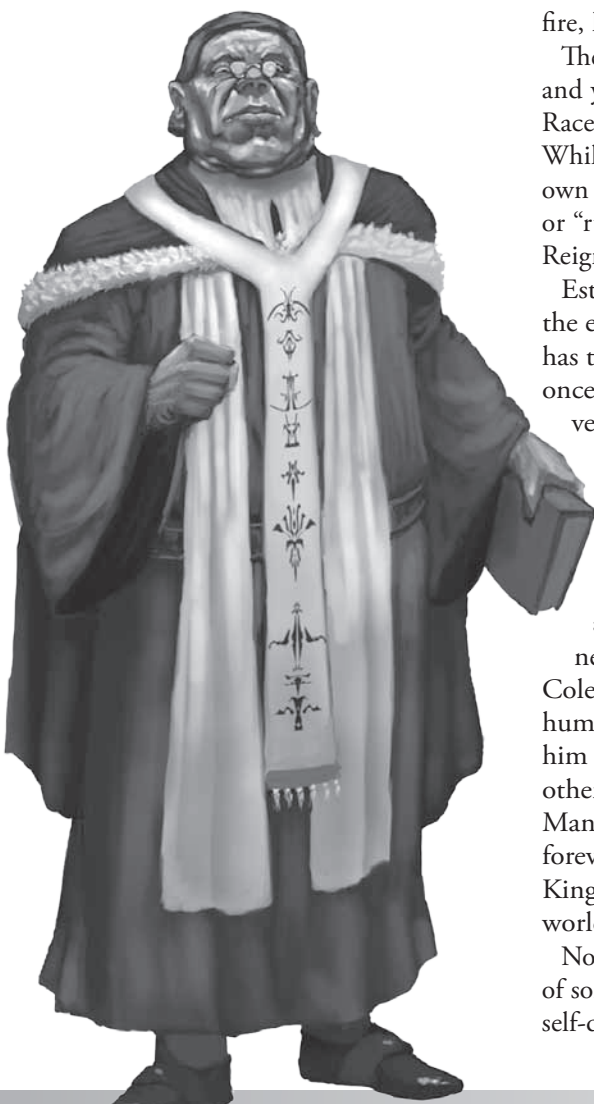
Now, to be human is to be part of something larger. A citizen of a self-deciding government, each has

liberty and responsibility. Each has what the philosophers called *courage*: the ability to recognize you are not the most important thing in the world. As such, humans do not serve themselves: they serve the Reign. While human achievement is always self-satisfying, satisfaction is not the end goal. “What betters the Reign?” is the prime question. The king serves the Reign. The king’s magistrates serve the Reign. The citizens serve the Reign. And the Reign provides them freedom to pursue happiness.

At least, that is what *was* true. These days, the bones of the Kingdom are old and beginning to brittle. The blood is thin. And where the word courage was once shouted from the rooftops, it is now a chorus in a song: repeated over and over again from habit.

True, there are those who still remember the passion of the philosophers and their transformative magic, but those days are long gone. The selfish reward themselves while the needy suffer with naught. Temples of foreign gods are on every street corner, their luring voices calling to the weak. And the king sits the throne a bitter and broken man. Where is the courage of men? Where is the glory of the Reign?

Not all is lost. The courage of men remains, although it may be asleep in their hearts. There are those who carry it still. Those who inspire others through their deeds. Stories spread of young men and women whose actions may yet ignite the quiescent fire. Even now, word of their deeds spreads



throughout the Kingdom by voice and printer's ink. Some even speak of a second Reign, when humans will rise up as they did before.

Rise up and take hold of their destiny. Rise up and claim what is theirs. Rise up and Reign.

The Elevation of Men

If we only contemplate what we are, we will never see what we may become.

— Valir Severin, The Philosophies

Humans are bound not by a common faith but by a common philosophy: that all men may become more than they are through rigorous training, insight, and learning. The Kingdom of Men builds schools and universities to bring this insight to all men and women.

While other races seek insight and power from external entities, humanity looks for power from within. Will, self-determination, and dignity are the virtues of humans and these virtues provide power the other races can only describe as “magical.” But men would claim these abilities are the exact opposite of magic; instead, the abilities taught to children in human schools and universities are only tapping into latent power within the human spirit.

Instead of *temples*, humans have *universities*. Each town and village has at least one building dedicated to knowledge and learning; a place where men go to cure their curiosity.

Instead of *priests*, humans have

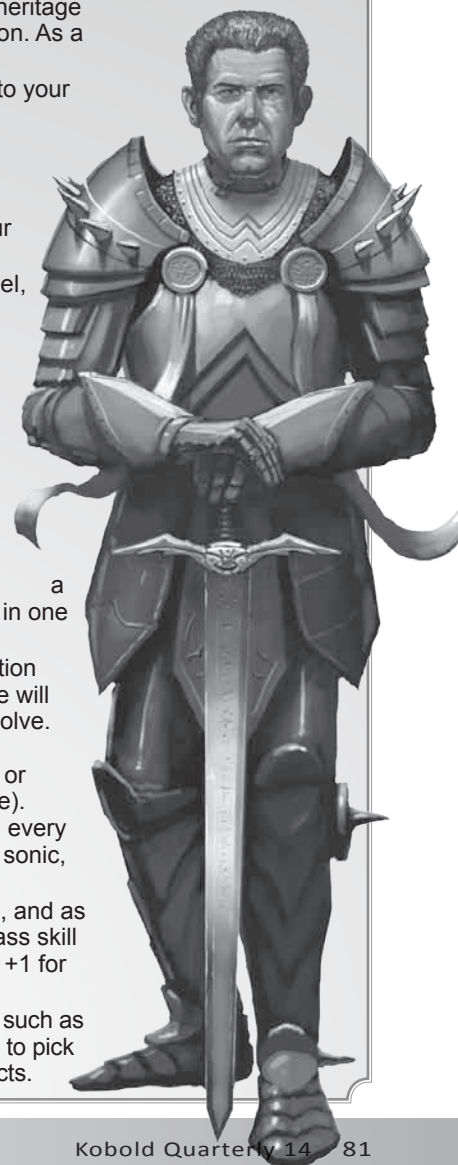


Wicked fantasy is a re-invention of core fantasy races by unorthodox designer John Wick. Put some wicked spin on your next character or campaign.

philosophers (sometimes called “travelers” or “seekers”). These scholars bring books with them wherever they go, teaching and learning both, bravely baring the fragile light of knowledge to a dark and haunted world. These philosophers are not simply book-

Human Racial Traits

- **+2 to Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma:** You have an ancient lineage and a proud heritage that stresses standing on your own. You excel at teamwork, innovation, and inspiration. As a result, you have great wellsprings of inner strength.
- **Medium:** As a Medium-size creature, you have no special bonuses or penalties due to your size.
- **30-ft. base land speed**
- **Divine Power:** Because your people developed as a culture without the influence of gods, you are fiercely resistant to the divine magic that other races take for granted. If you choose to adopt a divine patron, though, you bring that same conviction to your divine studies. As a result, you gain one of two bonuses.
 1. If you are not a divine spellcaster (that is, you do not have any divine caster level, divine spells, or access to domains), you gain a +2 racial bonus to all saving throws against divine spells and effects (including effects from divine scrolls). This bonus increases by +1 for every 4 character levels.
 2. If you have any divine spellcasting ability, you instead gain a +1 CL bonus to all divine spells. If you start with no divine casting ability and, later, gain it or if you have divine casting ability and lose it, change the bonuses from this ability appropriately.
- **Improved Teamwork:** When you take the aid another action, the recipient receives a +4 bonus to the corresponding check, instead of +2.
- **Martial Weapon Proficiency:** Even humans who live in relatively secure areas must occasionally defend themselves, and many human cultures have a particular weapon associated with their nation. You gain Martial Weapon Proficiency in one weapon of your choice at 1st level.
- **Rally:** You can drive others to new heights of determination through shouts of inspiration and encouragement—or through threats. As a move action 1/day, you can bolster the will of an ally by haranguing, shouting, yelling a battle cry, or otherwise inspiring new resolve. The ally must be within 30 ft. and must be able to hear you. Rally affects an ally who has failed a Will save since your last turn. Make a skill check using either Diplomacy or Intimidate: the result counts as a new save for the ally against one effect (your choice). You cannot use this ability on yourself. Additional daily uses of this power are gained every 3 levels, so it can be used 2/day at 3rd level, 3/day at 6th level, and so on. Rally is a sonic, mind-affecting, language-dependent ability.
- **Skillful:** Humans pursue a wide range of careers and live in a multitude of conditions, and as a result learn to excel in many different skills. Choose one skill. That skill is now a class skill for you. Additionally, you gain a +2 racial bonus in that skill. This bonus increases by +1 for every 4 character levels.
- **Automatic Language:** Common. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic). Humans have had to learn to deal with other cultures and races, so they tend to pick up languages from a wide range of sources, as well as having their own regional dialects.



Wicked Fantasy: Haffuns and Uvandir

The Wick take on halflings is the haffun (see KQ magazine #10), and the dwarves are reinvented as the uvandir (see KQ magazine #11). Elves were presented in KQ magazine #13. That leaves just the gnomes, which will appear in the compiled PDF edition of Wicked Fantasy available from Kobold Store in August.

This article completes the print series from Mr. Wick and Mr. Heinig, but they have a new Open Design project underway soon as well; see koboldquarterly.com for details.

bound clerics, but men and women trained to find and fight wickedness and evil, to protect those who cannot protect themselves. They can be found everywhere in the Reign of Men, armed not only with knowledge but also with armor, shield, and sword.

Apostasy

In these dark days, many men fall away from the path of philosophy and take up the faiths of enemy gods. As it turns out, some of the most fanatical and devoted of any god's followers turn out to be human.

Look in the temples of the elven or dwarven gods. You will find humans there, chanting prayers. Most of their human cousins look on these apostates sadly, seeing them as misguided fools, but more than a few even look upon them with a deep hatred, seeing them as traitors to their own race.

Human Pride

When the other races speak of humans, instead of "human will," they often invoke "human ego." Instead of "human pride," they talk about "human overconfidence." It is no secret humans are a proud race, but that pride can get the best of them from time to time. Tales of humans rushing into danger with no thought to their own safety or well-being. Courage or hubris? It is hard to decide.

Human Feats

These new feats are designed for human characters.

GOD KILLER

Fighting against the followers of cults and religions has made you savvy to the ways of divine spellcasters and unholy monstrosities.

Prerequisites: Human, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks, no divine spellcasting ability

Benefit: Your racial bonus to saving throws against divine spells and effects increases by +1, and you gain a +1 bonus to melee attack and damage rolls against anyone with divine spellcasting ability. As a full-round action, you may make a single melee attack against a divine spellcaster and gain an attack and damage bonus equal to the highest-level spell that the caster currently has prepared.

This bonus supersedes—and does not stack with—the normal +1 bonus granted by this feat. If the target currently has no divine spells (or no spells above level 0)



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prepared, you gain no bonus from this special attack, but you can still gain the normal +1 attack and damage bonus on regular melee attacks.

Special: If you ever gain divine spellcasting ability, you lose the benefits of this feat.

IMPROVED RALLY

Your ability to rally others makes you a natural leader of men.

Prerequisites: Human, Diplomacy 4 ranks or Intimidate 4 ranks

Benefit: When you use your rally racial ability, your skill check counts as a new Will saving throw for every ally—except yourself—within 30 ft. Allies must still be able to hear you, as normal. This effect functions only on allies who failed a Will save since your last turn.

Normal: Your rally racial ability affects one ally.

LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE

You pursue philosophia, the love of knowledge.

Prerequisites: Human, any Knowledge skills 4 ranks total

Benefit: You may make untrained Knowledge skill checks, even if you do not have any ranks in the Knowledge skill, regardless of the DC of the skill check. Once per day per four character levels (minimum of once per day), you may ruminate on a subject for 2 minutes in order to take 20 on a Knowledge skill check. As usual, you may only take 20 if you are not under stress or threat and have uninterrupted time to consider the question.

Normal: You may only make untrained Knowledge skill checks if the DC is 10 or less. You may not take 20 on Knowledge skill checks.

Human Religion

Humans have a view on religion all their own.

ELEVATION OF MAN (DEITY/IDEAL)

Neutral Good

Human clerics often pursue the Elevation of Man, a loose code of ethics that advocates self-

improvement, community, reason, and tolerance. Some clerics advocate orderly societies with strong rules to help protect the weak and advance the goals of nations while others promote self-determination and individual freedom to pursue one's personal destiny, but all adherents of this philosophy promote the common good and welfare of all humanity.

Portfolio: Humans, Philosophy, Self-Improvement

Domains: Good, Humanity, Philosophy, Protection

Weapon: Long Sword

HUMANITY DOMAIN (DOMAIN)

Deity/Ideal: Elevation of Man

Granted Powers: You gain a +2 sacred bonus to all Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks when interacting with humans. All humans encountered who would normally be Indifferent start as Friendly instead.

Domain Spells: 1st—*bless*, 2nd—*eagle's splendor*, 3rd—*heroism*, 4th—*tongues*, 5th—*telepathic bond*, 6th—*greater heroism*, 7th—*holy word*, 8th—*holy aura*, 9th—*mass heal*

PHILOSOPHY DOMAIN (DOMAIN)

Deity/Ideal: Elevation of Man

Granted Powers: For a total time per day of 1 round/cleric level you possess, you can act normally regardless of magical effects that control your actions or influence your mind as if you were affected by the spell *mind blank*. This effect occurs automatically as soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day (up to the total daily limit of rounds).

This granted power is a supernatural ability.

Domain Spells: 1st—*comprehend languages*, 2nd—*calm emotions*, 3rd—*suggestion*, 4th—*imbue with special ability*, 5th—*atonement*, 6th—*mass owl's wisdom*, 7th—*greater scrying*, 8th—*moment of prescience*, 9th—*astral projection* Ω

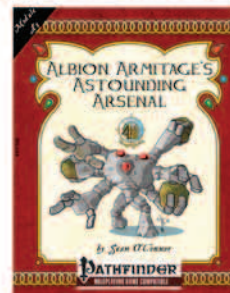
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Art & Expertise

50 New Ways to Use Your Skills

By Scott A. Murray

Art by Albrecht Dürer

When run well, skill challenges are among the most entertaining and engaging elements of 4th Edition. By providing GMs and players with a clear yet flexible framework for ruling complex tasks, skill challenges open up countless possibilities for both combat and noncombat encounters.

Unfortunately, however, skill challenges sometimes fall flat as players struggle to come up with interesting, creative ways to apply their skills. Perhaps they're struggling to think of their skills beyond the immediate "as written" applications. These 50 new ways to use skills should provide inspiration for player and GM alike.

Acrobatics

- **Detect subtle slopes by balancing on one foot and concentrating:** *I can tell the floor of this chamber angles slightly towards the far door. Ekko, keep an eye out for a rolling boulder trap.*
- **Squeeze or wriggle through tight or awkward spaces:** *I might be limber enough to twist through the fissure and snatch the dragon key.*
- **Dance, or identify a dance:** *The Westland waltz is one of my favorites too, Queen Isabella. Shall we?*

Arcana

- **Perform minor magical effects, such as heating a mug of ale or freezing a construct's gears:** *Kalliskaria was two ales ahead, four if you counted the ones she evaporated with her fiery cantrips.*

- **Identify and complete an unfinished magic ritual:** *This looks like a summoning circle—but it's missing the ruby focus. Riardon, take my ritual pouch and stand at the third point of the star.*
- **Navigate a library, or discern irregularities:** *The tomes on alchemy are usually never mixed with those on literature. Let's investigate the stacks on the second tier.*

Athletics

- **Impress an NPC with feats of strength:** *I am indeed worthy of the crown! Watch, as I lift the Fated Brazier over my head with ease!*
- **Recall knowledge of athletic competitions or contests:** *This ring is where the Stonehammer clan held their legendary wrestling tournaments. They say it was the only place ale wasn't permitted in the entire undermountain.*
- **Aid a climbing or jumping ally by offering tips on technique:** *Leap from the toes, Montiy! Push off the corner of the ledge!*

Bluff

- **Forge a convincing document:** *The seal of the empire is always done in blue ink, Titus. Plus, nobles never use the phrase "damned lot." Here, let me do it.*
- **Feign knowledge on any subject:** *Ah yes, that was the same season that... Bourne the Mighty held the goblins off at... Troubled Crossing, if I'm not mistaken.*

- **Detect common tricks, ploys, and decoys:** *This idol is a fake. Look, the braziers aren't bolted down and the dais isn't even made of silver—its painted stone. Oldest trick in the book.*

Diplomacy

- **Identify formal silverware:** *I remember this from my training as a servant—the third fork from the left is used for chicken.*
- **Recall knowledge of another culture's etiquette:** *Don't extend your hand when you greet the High Exarch, Titus. It's a challenge to a duel in this kingdom.*
- **Aid an ally in creating a disguise appropriate for a formal gathering:** *If you're going to blend in at the masque, Nadya, you're going to have to wear a feathered scarf and discard the piercings.*

Dungeoneering

- **Identify and exploit structural weaknesses:** *The Achilles heel of the drow design is the fragility of the pillars near the base. Strike there!*
- **Extrapolate the possible size and shape of chambers beyond doors or between corridors:** *Judging by the proximity of this stairwell to the ravine, the next chamber must be a lookout point of some sort. Keep an eye out for guards further up the cliff.*
- **Assist an ally in searching for secret doors or passageways:** *The stone here is noticeably newer and of*

finer quality than the rest. This must conceal a corridor to the temple.

Endurance

- **Fake enjoyment of a disgusting food or drink:** *The drow wine burned in his throat and made his stomach turn, but Titus endured the discomfort and feigned a satisfied smile.*
- **Lead others in exercises to build energy and resistance:** *We have a long hike ahead of us up Dagerspine Mountain, but the grandmaster showed me a few techniques that will help our bodies endure the journey ahead.*

Heal

- **Determine a corpse or skeleton's cause and time of death:** *Judging by the splintered ribs and shattered forearms, I suspect this goblin was bashed to death by a tower shield.*
- **Identify plants or substances with medicinal qualities:** *The leaves of the iron blossom will ease the pain in your fingers, Riardon.*
- **Aid another in faking an illness:** *People suffering from the screaming plague have yellowed ears. Hand me the dyes in my pouch, Ekko.*

History

- **Understand or decipher an ancient dialect:** *The engraving is written in Eldercommon, but many of the phrases are familiar to me.*
- **Recall a previously successful military tactic:** *The Knights of Valenar surged through the gap between the hills when they stormed the Black Fortress two centuries ago. It must still be the lich's blind spot.*
- **Identify the age of an art object by associating it with a historical period:** *The use of watercolors places this artifact square in the Revival period 9 centuries past. This keep must be at least that ancient, if not older.*

Insight

- **Discern natural from artificial patterns:** *The symmetrical arrangement of the trees in this grove suggests an elven village nearby.*
- **Anticipate the next move of a pursuing enemy:** *The guards have taken the high streets so far. They'll likely head to the bridge next, so let's double-back through the alleys instead.*
- **Deduce the relationship of a device component to the whole:** *Don't unwind the large gear, Pockets—that holds the entire pulley system in place!*

Intimidate

- **Recall the unique phobias of a race:** *The orcs of Bel'Hannor have an unusual fear of blue flame. Can you do anything with this torch, Kalliskaria?*
- **Contribute to the fashioning of a frightening disguise:** *The horns need to be longer, Eighteen. Add some of that kobold's blood to the cape, while you're at it—the tribe can't stand the sight of its own blood.*
- **Inspire an ally by making the stakes painfully clear:** *Move it, Riardon! If you don't get to the relic, every last man, woman, and child in Celeboth will have their souls scoured from within its weathered halls!*

Nature

- **Discern north:** *This way, friends.*
- **Cover the party's tracks more**

effectively: *The bandit king's basilisk mounts are easily misled by the odor of fish. Follow me to the stream—I think I know how we can cover our path.*

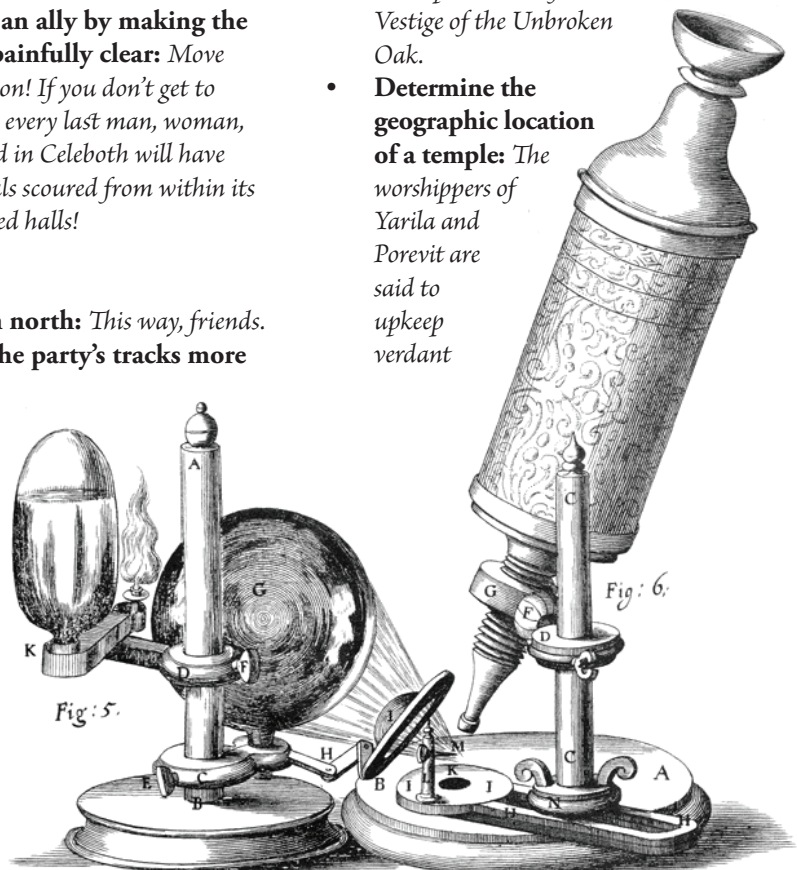
- **Determine the cause of weathering and decay on a surface:** *The carvings in this chamber look beaten by decades of wind and rain. The ceiling here must recede into the walls somehow.*

Perception

- **Guide an ally's climb from a distance:** *Watch out above, Montiy. The ledges up there look rather slippery.*
- **Identify ideal spots for observation:** *We won't see much from here. Let's head to the roof of the inn—we can get a view of the entire bazaar up from up there.*

Religion

- **Identify and complete an unfinished procession:** *I count 24 candles on this altar, and I detect a hint of cherry incense on the air. The cultists must have attempted to call forth the Vestige of the Unbroken Oak.*
- **Determine the geographic location of a temple:** *The worshippers of Yarila and Porevit are said to upkeep verdant*



Figurines of Wondrous Power

By Phillip Larwood
Art by Michael Bielaczyc

Figurines of wondrous power have a long and illustrious history. Ages ago, primordial elves used powerful druidic magic to bind animal spirits within stony shells that could be broken open to summon the spirit. Ancient dwarven clerics refined the practice, employing divine magic used in the construction of golems and other constructs to create quasi-real animals and monsters that could be easily carried around in statuette form.

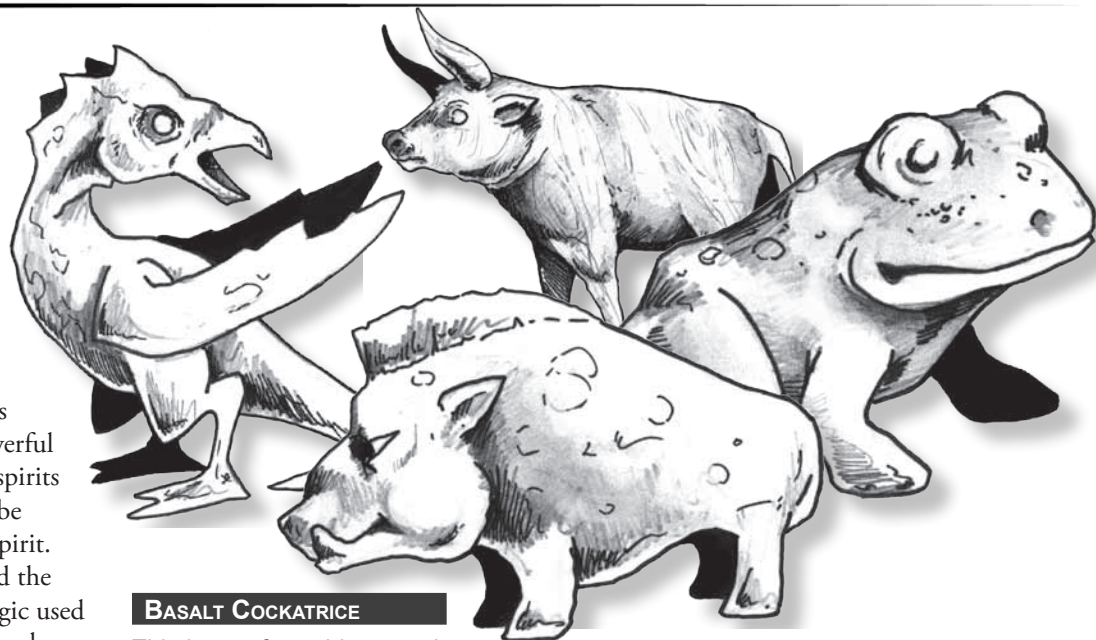
The creation of these figurines reached their zenith during the time of humanity's greatest empires, and entire temples were devoted to the production of magical figurines for the privileged and wealthy members of society.

Nowadays, the variety of figurines has fallen dramatically. Certainly a few have survived and remain in common use, yet this small handful is far from conclusive. Dozens more figurines can be found in the possession of monsters or stashed away in ruined crypts and shrines just waiting to fall into the hands of eager adventurers.

Figurine Gallery

Aura varies; **CL** varies

Slot —; **Price** 10,000 gp (basalt cockatrice), 12,500 gp (bloodstone boar), 15,000 gp (citrine toad), 16,500 gp (darkwood auroch), 18,000 gp (electrum eel), 24,000 gp (feldspar roc), 20,000 gp (obsidian scorpion), 17,000 gp (pearl dolphin), 30,000 gp (peridot peacock), 12,500 gp (tourmaline crab)



BASALT COCKATRICE

This lump of roughly carved basalt transforms into a cockatrice and faithfully serves you in battle. While carrying the figurine, you gain a +4 bonus to saving throws against petrification spells and effects. Any time the cockatrice is summoned, you lose this benefit for 24 hours, though you and your allies become immune to the cockatrice's petrifying touch. The cockatrice can be summoned 2/week for up to 6 hours total.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*.

BLOODSTONE BOAR

Tiny bloodlike splotches adorn this dark green spherical stone. When commanded, the figurine transforms into a large, reddish boar with the advanced creature template and faithfully serves you in battle. While carrying the figurine, you are treated as if having the benefits of the Diehard feat. Any time the boar is summoned, you lose this benefit for 24 hours. The boar can be summoned 1/day for up to 2 hours.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*.

CITRINE TOAD

This figurine appears as a small lump of pale green stone and transforms into a monstrous bright green toad. The toad has the same statistics as a giant frog and faithfully serves you in battle.

The toad can be commanded to store any non-living object it has swallowed as if it were a *bag of holding*: the object disappears from the creature's gullet to be stored in an extradimensional space. While storing an item in this way, the object does not take any bludgeoning damage from being swallowed, and the toad can swallow other objects or creatures without a problem.

The toad can store up to 100 lb. or 10 cu. ft. of material in this fashion and can regurgitate an item as a move action. If the toad reverts to figurine form with any swallowed objects still inside it, these objects remain inaccessible until the figurine is transformed back into toad form. Any creatures swallowed by the toad instantly return to an adjacent square when the toad reverts to figurine form. The toad can be used 1/day for up to 1 hour.

Moderate conjuration and transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*, *secret chest*.

DARKWOOD AUROCH

This crudely carved darkwood statuette transforms into an auroch. The auroch has no attacks, but when tethered to a cart or wagon, it can magically pull up to 10 tons and completely ignores difficult terrain—but not natural obstacles like chasms or deadfalls. If ordered to pull more than its maximum load, the auroch instantly reverts to figurine form and cannot



be summoned again for 1 day. The auroch can be summoned 2/month for up to 72 hours total. Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*.

ELECTRUM EEL

This tiny ring-shaped figurine of highly polished electrum functions as a *minor ring of electricity resistance*. When the figurine is placed in a body of water at least 10 ft. deep, it transforms into a giant silver electric eel with the tensile strength of steel (hardness 10). The electrum eel faithfully serves you in battle but does not protect you against electrical attacks. The eel can be summoned 1/week for up to 6 hours.

Moderate abjuration and transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects, resist energy*.

FELDSPAR ROC

This large yellowish gem is carved into the shape of an eagle taking flight. The figurine transforms into a golden roc complete with a military saddle and saddlebags, and it faithfully serves you as mount or combatant. The roc can be summoned 1/month for up to 24 hours.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*.

OBSDIAN SCORPION

This glittering dark green carving transforms into a giant scorpion and faithfully serves in battle. While in scorpion form, you can detach the creature's stinger and use it as a +3 *shortspear*. The giant scorpion loses its sting attack while you use its stinger in this fashion, and if the scorpion is slain,

the spear vanishes. The scorpion can be summoned 1/day for up to 1 hour. Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*.

PEARL DOLPHIN

This large streamlined figurine is a single flawless white pearl. When placed in a body of water at least 50 ft. deep, the figurine instantly transforms into a glistening white dolphin. The dolphin has the same statistics as an ordinary dolphin with the following exceptions: it has an Intelligence of 10, the celestial template, and a +2 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls against sharks and sahuagin.

The pearl dolphin speaks Aquan, Celestial, and Common. The dolphin acts as guardian and mount, and it can be summoned 2/week for up to 12 hours total.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*.

PERIDOT PEACOCK

This brilliant bluish stone gleams with accents of other colors and resembles a roughly carved peacock. The figurine transforms into a giant peacock with the same statistics as an advanced giant eagle that can be used as a mount or combatant.

In addition, the peacock can replicate the effects of a *symbol of persuasion* (DC 19) or *symbol of stunning* (DC 20) simply by spreading out its fan-shaped tail. Each of these

spell-like abilities can be used 1/day. The peacock can be used 1/week for a maximum duration of 12 hours total. Strong enchantment and transmutation; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects, symbol of persuasion, symbol of stunning*.

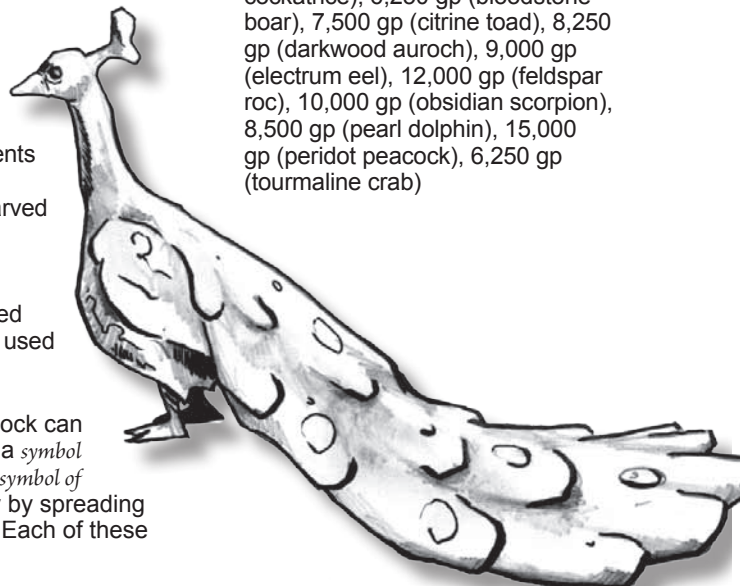
TOURMALINE CRAB

This clear reddish gem has the shape of a crab. When activated, the figurine transforms into a giant red crab with a hardness of 8. Both mount and combatant, it grants you the benefit of the *water breathing* spell while riding on top of it. The giant crab can be summoned 1/day for up to 2 hours.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects, water breathing*.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*, additional spells, see text; **Cost** 5,000 gp (basalt cockatrice), 6,250 gp (bloodstone boar), 7,500 gp (citrine toad), 8,250 gp (darkwood auroch), 9,000 gp (electrum eel), 12,000 gp (feldspar roc), 10,000 gp (obsidian scorpion), 8,500 gp (pearl dolphin), 15,000 gp (peridot peacock), 6,250 gp (tourmaline crab)



Maker's Mark Powers

1d10 Power

- 1 The creature gains darkvision 60 ft. and the scent ability. If the creature already possesses darkvision, the range doubles.
- 2 The creature can see invisibility at will (as the spell). If the creature can already see invisibility, it gains true seeing (as the spell, CL 11th) 1/day.
- 3 The creature gains the celestial creature template. If it is already celestial, it gains the Foo Creature or Giant creature template.
- 4 The creature gains the fiendish creature template. If it is already fiendish, it gains the Abomination creature or Advanced creature template.
- 5 The creature gains the advanced creature template. If it is already advanced, it gains the legendary creature template.
- 6 The creature gains the giant creature template. If it is already giant, it gains the advanced creature template.
- 7 The creature becomes immune to mind-affecting spells and effects.
- 8 All of the creature's movement rates double, and it gains the benefits of a haste spell 1/day (CL 11th).
- 9 The creature can be summoned an additional 1/week or month. If the creature can be summoned 1/day, the duration of the summoning doubles instead.
- 10 When in figurine form, the creature gains double the normal hardness and hp of a similar figurine. While animated, the creature gains fast healing equal to 1/4 of its HD (minimum 1).

Maker's Mark

Some *figurines of wondrous power* carry a special magical glyph known as a *maker's mark*, linking the figurine to a particular organization, guild, or temple. Figurines that carry a *maker's mark* (usually stamped somewhere on the bottom of the figurine) possess additional powers above those of standard figurines. A *maker's mark* increases the cost of a figurine by 50%. Some of the variant powers possessed by these figurines are provided below (see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* for details on templates).

Famous houses and guilds known for producing figurines with *maker's marks* include House Veladraune (elf enchanters whose mark is an eagle perched on a wand), Throgdrin and Sons (a family of skilled dwarves whose mark is the dwarven rune for life), and the Forgetower Guild (human wizards and magewrights whose mark is a pair of hands cupping a statuette).

Figurines of Fell Power

A small number of *figurines of wondrous power* carry curses placed on them, either by accident or by design. Just as with other cursed magic items, *figurines of fell power*, as they are sometimes known, resemble normal figurines until their curse manifests. These are some of the more common curses possessed by *figurines of fell power*. Ω



Figurine Curses

1d8 Curse

- 1 While in statuette form, the figurine functions as a stone of weight (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* for details). It otherwise functions normally.
- 2 If the figurine is slain in creature form, the figurine loses all power until you slay a creature of the same type as the figurine and sprinkles the creature's blood over it. It otherwise functions normally.
- 3 When the creature is summoned, it attacks you to the exclusion of all other opponents. The creature returns to figurine form only when you or it has been killed. It functions normally after that, until it gains a new owner.
- 4 The figurine animates when you are unconscious or otherwise helpless and proceeds to devour you (treat as a coup de grace attempt). Once finished, the creature returns to figurine form. It otherwise serves you faithfully.
- 5 The first time the creature is summoned, it serves for its normal duration, but then becomes a natural creature of the same type, and it is no longer under your control. The creature also loses any spell-like or supernatural abilities it would not normally have. Thus, an onyx dog would become a normal riding dog and lose its increased Intelligence and supernatural abilities.
- 6 When the creature reverts to figurine form, it teleports 1d100 ft. from you in a random direction. It otherwise functions normally.
- 7 The figurine only functions at night or underground and instantly reverts to statuette form if exposed to daylight. It otherwise functions normally.
- 8 The figurine only functions for creatures of a particular alignment, class, race, or religion. It otherwise functions normally.

Coming Next Issue

Man, it's tough to come up with the goods after the big GenCon issue, seeing everyone at the show, overfeeding the dire weasels before their winter sleep. Still, as kobolds it is our goal, our desire, our groveling need to entertain. Here's what we're thinking, O Esteemed Reader. If you hate these, we can make them go away. The weasels are still hungry.

Midgard: The Shared World of Zobeck

The shared world of Zobeck has a name and a logo. What's next for this exercise in patron-based worldbuilding? More details on the open approach to setting design.

Druids Go Deep

Not one but two articles for *PATHFINDER* Roleplaying Game druids to go into the heart of the wild.

Trap City, Baby

The Kobold Trap Emporium will finally open wide its doors! Traps and traps! We are most excited to share our engines of destruction with those who might be its next victims!

Plus, we may have a non-D&D game article of some kind, for flavor, and likely also some undead, and maybe also an ecology of the tasty, tasty DonkeyHorse. If we don't eat it first. See you next time, dear readers!



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Amber Heart

An Adventure for Tales of the Old Margreve

By Tim & Eileen Connors

Art by Allison Theus

Map by Corey Macourek

With special thanks to playtesters Clare Jones and Pete Pollard

“Amber Heart” is a wilderness fantasy adventure suitable for four PCs of 3rd level. It takes place in winter at a coaching inn in the heart of a vast forest. The map may be found on the inside back cover of this issue.

Adventure Background

A blizzard has blanketed the Margreve Forest in snow and silence. After trudging through the drifts, the PCs arrive at the Griffon’s Nest Coaching Inn. A group of Kariv gypsies arrive from the opposite direction.

The Kariv wagons bear three gypsies with an illness that defies cure. Unbeknownst to anyone, the three are possessed by sap demons, forest oozes that dripped from a sacred grove of winterwood trees that the gypsies cut for firewood. The freezing temperatures suppress the sap demons’ domination of their hosts, but the afflicted bleed from their ears and cannot walk.

Other winterwood avengers pursue the Kariv as well. Snow serpents that hunt like wolves and swim through the snow hail a blizzard that snaps at the Kariv’s heels.

Adventure Summary

The adventure begins with the stunted scream of the last gypsy rider as a snow serpent rips him from his saddle and dives into a snow bank. The gypsies panic. With no time to spare, their leader locks the sick in the wagons and orders everyone else inside the inn.

Snow serpents circle the building, howling and appearing at windows buried under drifts. The creatures topple the Kariv wagons, prompting the PCs to undertake a dangerous

rescue mission for the crippled gypsies inside. Those the PCs rescue slowly warm, allowing the murderous sap demons inside them to take control. Those the PCs do not rescue die outside, releasing sap demons that ooze into the stable and down the chimneys.

While the snow serpents circle outside, the possessed gypsies stalk the inn for victims. The PCs must rescue children hiding in the squat darkness of the root cellar, exorcise their murderous parents, and prevent sap demons from slipping down their own throats.

Adventure Hooks

The PCs may be delivering critical supplies, escorting ambitious merchants through the winter snows, or traveling to another adventure.

Introduction

(CR 7; XP 3,200)

Read the following to start the dice rolling!

A blizzard has blanketed the forest in 3 ft. of snow. You have trudged along a wagon-wide path and now stand at the entrance of the Griffon’s Nest Coaching Inn. Drifts of snow ramp up its sides, and the smell of burning wood rises from its chimneys.

A company of Kariv gypsies arrives from the other direction. Their horses froth and struggle to haul their wagons

to the inn before a blizzard overtakes them. A dozen gypsies walk in the wake of their four wagons and a lone rider brings up the rear.

A sudden eerie howl echoes over the snow, and the Kariv freeze. A snaking flash of blue rips the lone rider from his saddle, diving and disappearing with him into a snow bank. Screams cut through the forest silence as gypsy children pour from the wagons, adults start running, and an old Kariv man orders “Everyone to the inn, NOW!”

The PCs stand at the inn’s entrance, 50 ft. down the road from the Kariv wagons and 100 ft. from where the lone rider’s horse bucks alone.

Terrain. The 3-ft.-deep snow on the 10-ft.-wide road reduces movement to 1/4 normal and makes running and charging impossible. Windblown snow drifts 5 – 8 ft.-high flank the road.

Creatures. Snow serpents have snarling winter wolf heads and serpentine bodies tinged with blue fur. The lead serpent spends the next 10 minutes devouring the unhorsed Kariv rider. Another serpent howls in the distance, tunneling under the snow and arriving at the Kariv wagons in 4 rounds. The snow serpents’ 16-ft.-long bodies leave twisting trails of upturned snow as they race just under the crust. Because they often tunnel deeper, the PCs cannot determine how many creatures there are.

SNOW SERPENT (2) CR 5

hp 57; Treat a snow serpent as a winter wolf (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 280) with the following exceptions: blindsense 60 ft., Spring Attack instead of Run, no breath weapon, no language, and speed 50 ft. in snow and 10 ft. elsewhere.

During Combat. Snow serpents play with their food. They detest horseflesh, but enjoy humanoid flesh, preferring feeble or wounded targets. They use Spring Attack to emerge, attack, and disappear again (total concealment). They drag dying creatures into snowdrifts and devour each one over 10 minutes. Snow serpents do not enter the inn but besiege it until the snow melts in 1 month.

The Kariv

The group consists of 20 gypsies—12 men (1 dead, 3 sick/possessed), 5 women, and 3 children. Their patriarch, Ladislav, is an old man with exotic features and thick cataracts. One wagon bears the three sick brothers: Boleslaus, Karel, and Lazlo. Heroes who rush to the Kariv's aid overhear panicked gypsy women arguing about carrying the sick men into the inn and Ladislav overruling them, declaring that there isn't time.

Ladislav is the last Kariv to flee. A snow serpent attacks him, and he defends himself with his *necklace of fireballs* (type 1). If he dies, the Kariv take direction from the PCs.

Each Kariv wears leather armor and possesses a light mace, a light crossbow, and 5 bolts. The remainder of their ammunition and supplies are in the wagons.

The Inn

The Griffon's Nest Coaching Inn, once a fortified griffon tower, features 2-ft.-thick stone walls and a ruined second story. Innkeepers Lew and Marya

Cestmir stand in the entry, waving everyone inside. Lew wears *boots of the winterlands*. Marya holds a crossbow. Their sons, Milos and Pavel, scramble to close the stable doors.

NPC ADULT CR 1

Assume all adult NPCs share the following statistics:

XP 400

Human expert 3

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 22 (3d8+9)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee handaxe +3 (1d6/x3) or light mace +3 (1d6/x2)

Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19-20)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5,

Knowledge (nature) +5, Ride +7, Survival +6

Languages Common

POSSESSED ADULT

While indoors. Gain +4 Str, +4 Con (+6 hp), +2 Will, -2 AC, blindsight 60 ft., Diehard, and Vital Strike.

When burned. Affected as if by *haste* for 1 minute: +1 attack, +1 AC, +1 Reflex, +30 ft., and an extra attack.

While outdoors. Affected as if by *slow*—staggered, move or standard action only, -1 attack, -1 AC, -1 Reflex; also prone and speed 5 ft.

The Griffon's Nest Inn

Unless otherwise noted, all rooms are lit and all doors are strong, wooden, and unlocked (hardness 5; hp 20; break DC 25 when locked). The innkeeper scolds his teenage son for failing to fetch firewood. Unless the PCs fetch more, the inn's temperature plummets to 0° F on day 2 and the occupants risk freezing to death (see *Cold Dangers*, *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). The snow-covered wood pile sits 50 ft. from the stable.

A) Work Shed. This area contains horseshoes, hammers, nails, a crowbar, a

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worktable, a handaxe, a shovel, a water barrel, a lantern, and 8 pints of oil.

B) Stablehand's Quarters. Milos and Pavel share a bed, a lantern, and a fear of were-creatures. Snowshoes and shortbows hang beside quivers of 24 regular and 6 silvered arrows.

C) Stable. Horses buck, goats bleat, and chickens peck. Wagons and sleds for hauling wood sit in a corner. A carving knife and handaxe stick in a butcher-block table. A pitchfork leans against a ladder that climbs to a hayloft.

D) Hay Loft. A ladder leads to the ruined second story, dominated by rubble and snow.

E) Entry.

F) Main Hall. Double hearths blaze. A small stack of wood remains.

G) Kitchen. A fire licks a hanging pot of stew. The outside door is locked. A trapdoor leads to a 3-ft.-tall, pitch-dark root cellar that stretches under the entire building. Assume the same walls as the ground floor, but replace doors with openings. Medium creatures must crawl (prone, 5 ft. move).

H) Storage. A smoked deer carcass hangs on a hook above flour sacks and ale kegs.

I) Innkeeper's Quarters. A sliding iron bar can lock the door from the inside. An iron grate behind the Main Hall hearth (Area E) warms the room and offers an unhosted sap demon entrance.

J & K) Men's Quarters and Women's Quarters. Bedrolls lie atop flattened mounds of hay. The room smells of chamber pots and bed warmer coals.

Event 1:

The Sap Demons Get Inside

After everyone is inside, the blizzard strikes (5 ft. vision, 1/8 normal movement). A Kariv woman named Sadira worries aloud about any of her sick brothers still in the wagon: "They'll never survive out there. We've got to save them!" Sadira begs the PCs to rescue them. It will be dark soon.

The PCs discover the wagons toppled. Each of the sick men inside has taken 4 damage from sap demon

induced bleeding. The two snow serpents presently tear Lazlo apart somewhere under the snow. One of the serpents breaks off in 6 rounds to find its own meal.

A sap demon oozes out of each dead gypsy. It inches under the snow, up the inn's face, down a chimney, and into the warm body of someone inside—secretly. Lazlo's sap demon infects a Kariv man in the stable (see Event 2).

Sadira takes rescued brothers into the women's quarters, where she extinguishes the hearth fire to minimize their bleeding. The possessed men lie on bedrolls, ears bleeding and legs useless. Their sap demons take control when they warm (see Event 3).

Event 2:

Slaughter in the Stable (CR 5; XP 1,600)

After Event 1, at a moment of the GM's choosing, a possessed Kariv named Andrej hacks Milos (the innkeepers' son) with a handaxe in the stable. The PCs hear Milos howl in pain (2 damage). Andrej has barricaded the door to the Main Hall. It must be chopped down.

The PCs enter as Andrej spots Milos' brother Pavel behind a horse. Andrej's ears bleed; he has already taken 2 hp bleeding damage. He hefts an axe doused with flaming lamp oil (1d3 fire damage to himself for 2 rounds).

If the PCs kill or render Andrej unconscious, the sap demon exits and attacks. The PCs may know the following about this strange ooze:

Knowledge (Arcana/Nature)

DC 13	Sap demons possess creatures.
DC 18	Heat speeds them, cold slows them.
DC 23	They exit unconscious hosts.

Event 3:

The Sap Demons Rage (2 x CR 5; XP 3,800)

During Event 2, the sap demons inside the gypsies rescued in Event 1 warm enough to take control of their hosts in the women's quarters. The walls drip with blood and beaded lines of amber

sap. Sadira lies dead, and the sap demons take new bodies, if possible. After Event 2, the PCs confront the simultaneous problems.

Possessed innkeeper Lew knives his screaming wife Marya in their locked bedroom. If confronted, Lew attempts to exit through a window and re-enter elsewhere. His magic boots keep the sap demon active, even outside. Lew's sap demon may switch hosts, hide in a horse, or attack during the night.

Meanwhile, a possessed Kariv woman draws a cleaver from kitchen storage, sears her hand on the cook pot, opens the root cellar trapdoor, and smiles at the two children hiding there. The children's screams alert the PCs, who see the woman descend. As the children whimper in a distant corner of the dark root cellar, the possessed woman drinks a reserved *potion of invisibility* and lies in wait for any hero who crawls in after her. The sap demon prefers the strong body of a hero and attempts possession.

Meanwhile, everyone begs the heroes to subdue and spare their possessed family members.

Lone PC Option. A fourth unhosted sap demon drops behind any lone PC and attempts possession.

Conclusion

If the PCs die, everyone dies. The creatures disperse, and the Griffon's Nest sits empty in the snow.

If the PCs destroy the creatures, the survivors give thanks. For saving Lew and his family, Lew gives the PCs his *boots of the winterlands*. For rescuing the Kariv children, a child gives a startling and accurate tarot reading regarding the PCs' next adventure.

Tales of the Old Margreve

If you enjoyed this short adventure, you may also enjoy the latest Open Design project *Tales of the Old Margreve*, a gazetteer and eight-adventure anthology where PCs confront Old World creatures, ply the power of folk magic, and earn a place in fireside tales. Check it out when it ships this Fall!

New Creature: Sap Demon

Amber sap oozes from an axe cut to a stout maple's trunk. It forms a small figure on the forest floor. Vaguely humanoid in appearance, this languid ooze half walks and half flows, endlessly following the axe wielder's path to certain revenge.

Sap demons are intelligent oozes that track down those that inflicted the tree wounds from which they bled. A few hours after an axe cut, these amber creatures pool into a shape that vaguely resembles their tree's attacker; for instance, a hat may be incorporated into the overall shape.

Sap demons pummel their prey with pseudopod fists. They enjoy claiming the weapon that wounded their tree and wielding it to deliver a final blow.

For speed, maneuverability, and protection, a sap demon may ooze down a creature's throat and dominate it. Once inside, its host bleeds as the sap demon's tree bled.

Since the sap demon takes no damage when its host is wounded, it performs reckless acts. It often burns its host to gain access to its summer's step ability. It may wander into town for fisticuffs and mayhem, or it may bed a local woman who later gives birth to a forest changeling.

SAP DEMON

CR 3

XP 800

CE Small ooze

Init -2; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (-2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 27 (5d8+5); fast healing 5

Fort +2, **Ref** -1, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities ooze traits; **DR** 5/slashing

Weaknesses winter's kiss

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +7 (1d4+2 plus grab)

Special Attacks soul sap

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 6, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4 (+10 grapple);

CMD 14 (18 grapple)

Feats Defensive Combat Training, Improved Grapple, Weapon

Focus (slam)

Skills Climb +15, Escape Artist +10,

Stealth +11, Survival +9; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Climb, +12 Escape Artist, +4 Stealth, +2 Survival

Language none (but see soul sap)

SQ amorphous, summer's step

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Amorphous (Ex) A sap demon squeezes as though 2 size categories smaller.

Grab (Ex) The sap demon's grab is effective against opponents up to 1 size larger than itself.

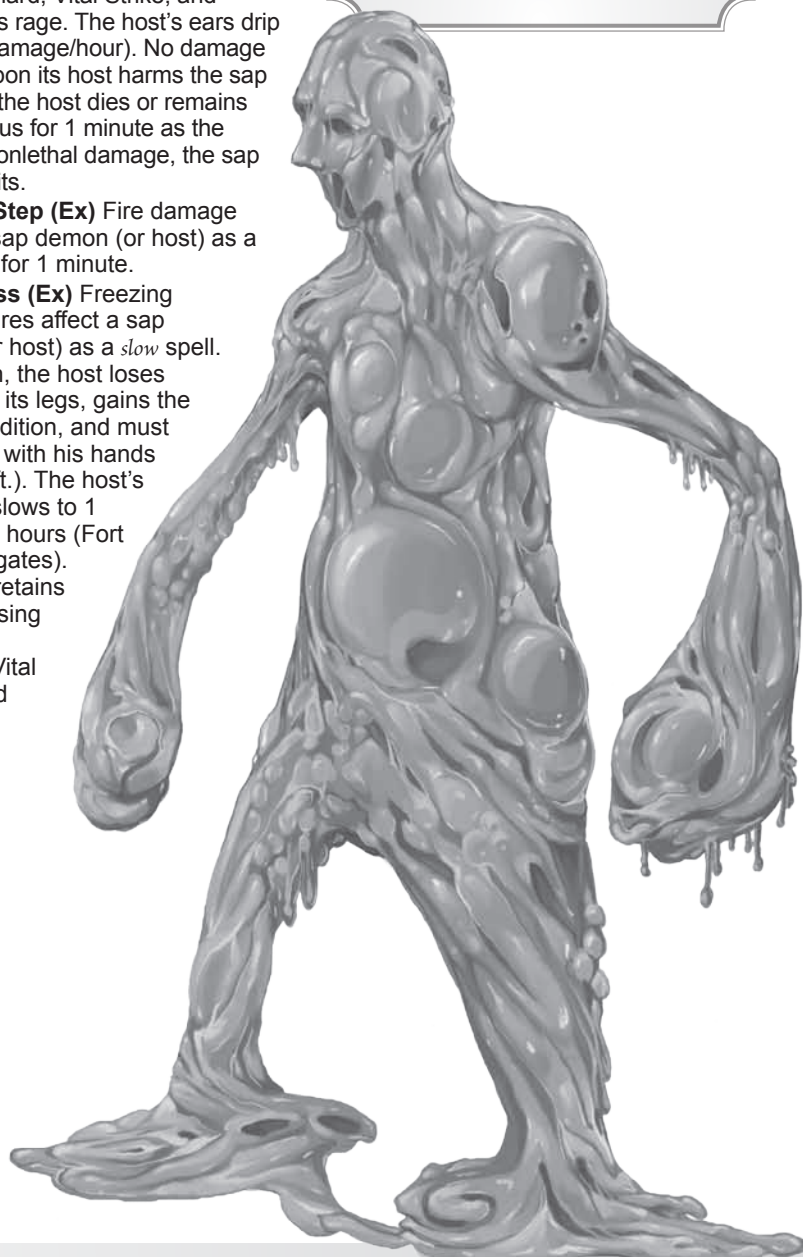
Soul Sap (Su) A sap demon may slide down the throat of a sleeping, helpless, or pinned living creature that is within 1 size category of itself. Once inside, the sap demon takes control of its host. Treat the effect as *dominate monster*, and as if the sap demon speaks the creature's language. While dominated, the host gains blindsight 60 ft., Diehard, Vital Strike, and barbarian's rage. The host's ears drip blood (1 damage/hour). No damage inflicted upon its host harms the sap demon. If the host dies or remains unconscious for 1 minute as the result of nonlethal damage, the sap demon exits.

Summer's Step (Ex) Fire damage affects a sap demon (or host) as a *haste* spell for 1 minute.

Winter's Kiss (Ex) Freezing temperatures affect a sap demon (or host) as a *slow* spell. In addition, the host loses the use of its legs, gains the prone condition, and must drag itself with his hands (speed 5 ft.). The host's bleeding slows to 1 damage/3 hours (Fort DC 15 negates). The host retains control, losing blindsight, Diehard, Vital Strike, and rage. Ω

Designer's Note on Grapple

This creature has exactly the right CMB/CMD to pin the avg 3rd level PC with its soul sap ability about 50% of the time. I like the pin mechanic because it is flavorful and takes more than one round to accomplish. The demon has a high chance to grapple the PC, a reasonable chance to avoid being ungrappled, and a fair chance to establish a pin. GMs who find even the streamlined grapple rules cumbersome may want to forget about pin and make soul sap a special touch attack with about the same chance of success. That makes it roughly a +9 touch attack.





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The Birdfolk of Zobeck

By Wolfgang Baur

Art by Katsushika Hokusai

In the world of Midgard, the tengu hail from the lands beyond the Mharoti Empire. Their flocks and rookeries and treetop towns are strung all along the great eastern mountains and in the peaks of distant Sikkim, Khandiria, and Cathay. Many of these tengu are winged, though not all, and many can fly for brief periods. They all harbor a love of flight and high places.

In that vein, the tengu are mountain folk, and they are widely believed to have a kingdom of their own near Sikkim although only a few adventurers have travelled far enough to see it. This realm is Beldestan and is rumored to be a land of such great forests and mountains that few humans can traverse it without flying magic—so sharp its peaks and so deep its valleys. Atop those mountains are many cliffs riddled with tengu “perches”—each such perch is home to a nesting pair, and many are two- or even three-roomed areas snug against the mountain cold.

Guardians and Rookeries

To the west, the tengu are rarities although hardly unknown. The only Midgardian cities with large populations of tengu are the eldest of the Seven Cities, Remulus and Triolo. Both treat tengu as full citizens and allow somewhat seedy rookeries within the city walls. The tengu live in peace as merchants, scouts, bodyguards, and temple wardens in both cities, and on those rare occasions when things grow too hot for them in the Seven Cities, they often take passage as sharp-eyed sailors on caravels or serve in the navies of Illyria and Marea.

Tengu serve most often as sailors on the White Sea to Selket and the River

Kingdom of Nuria-Natal, guarding cargoes from pirates and the sultan's raiders.

These tengu are feathered grey, and many seem to have some aptitude for weather magic.

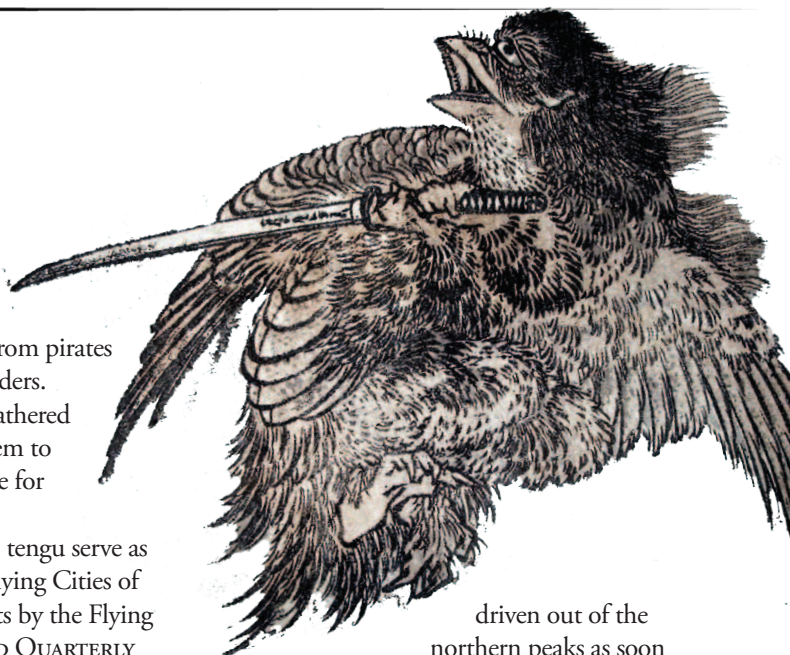
In a similar vein, tengu serve as guardians of the Flying Cities of Sikkim. These visits by the Flying Cities (see *KOBOLD QUARTERLY* magazine #3) are special events, and the tengu are extremely vigilant in protecting the trade folk of Sikkim. Some Zobeck merchants believe this is because the tengu have partial shares in the goods traded and shipped by the Flying Cities.

Tengu worship Anu-Akma, the God of Death from the south, as well as Azuran, Lord of the Four Winds and Victory, the Eastern Lord of the Air. Others follow other sky-god cults or their own practices. Their worship seems to involve frequent chanting and repetitive song; many of these vocalizations are quite beautiful. Dawn is the traditional hour of worship for the Midgardian tengu.

Northern Wings

The northernmost of the tengu roost in the gnomish realms of Niemheim, and the northern kingdom of Vidim are on friendly terms with the priests of Loki. Partly due to this gnomish connection and partly due to the tengu love of mischief, both the Northern and Ironcrag dwarves generally distrust all tengu as creatures of ill luck.

A few dwarves maintain that the tengu are messengers of Wotan the Skyfather, but this is rare, and most tengu are



driven out of the northern peaks as soon as they are discovered. Only the shield-maidens and aasimar are welcome to dwell on the Trollheim peaks.

Tengu attempting to establish themselves as shrine guardians of the hammering gods have themselves been slaughtered by dwarf axe and crossbow. And yet the tengu seem fascinated by the northern gods and have repeatedly launched pilgrimages from the south to reach the temples of Stannasgard. The complete failure of these pilgrimages to reach the holy dwarf temple-city seems not to discourage them.

And so it goes. The tengu are visitors to Midgard's southern and eastern regions, gradually earning some level of trust among the merchants of Dornig, Zobeck, and the Seven Cities as guardians of wares and watchers over mule trains and caravans. Yet for every caravan that comes from Illyria to Zobeck without incident, another tengu plays the rogue and scampers off with a merchant's fat purse.

The tengu remain a people best watched carefully and treated as suspicious; their love of blades and their strange code of honor make them intriguing but not trustworthy in the eyes of the other races of Zobeck. Ω

Griffon's Nest

COACHING INN

by Corey Macourek

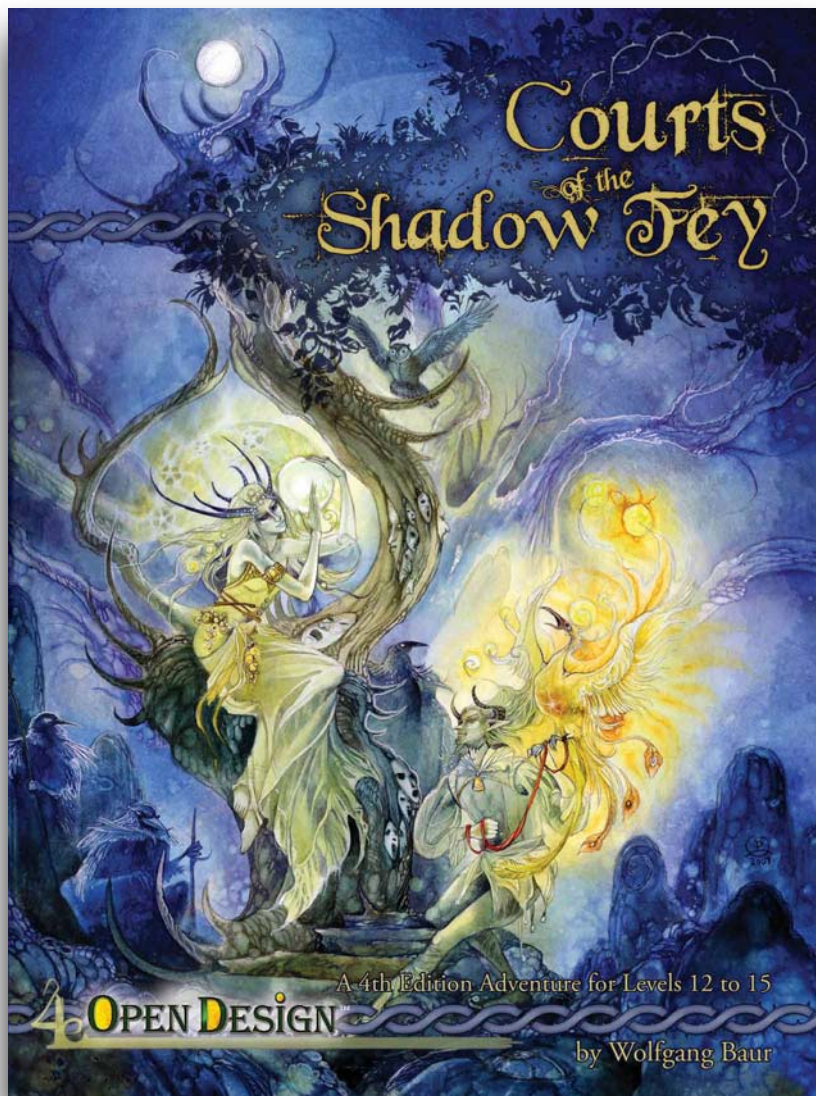


LADDER TO
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2ND STORY SIZE = C

TO ROOT CELLAR
SIZE = ALL

- A** Workshed
- B** Stablehand's Quarters
- C** Stable
- D** Hay Loft
- E** Entry
- F** Main Hall
- G** Kitchen
- H** Storage
- I** Innkeeper's Quarters
- J** Men's Quarters
- K** Women's Quarters

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